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MONTAIGNE;

The Endless Study.

AND

OTHER MISCELLANIES.

By ALEXANDER VINET.

Translated, with an Introduction and Notes

By Bobert Turnbull.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

Those acquainted with a volume of Vinet's Essays and Discourses published by the translator a few years ago, but now out of print, under the title of "Vital Christianity," will readily discover, in a modified form, some portions of that work in the present, particularly in the Introduction and in the latter part of the volume. Circumstances, over which the editor had no control, left him only this method of preserving for the use of the public, any part of that work, which was received with unusual cordiality, and served to introduce Vinet to American readers. The present volume, we think, will be found to possess a still higher interest and value, as it contains some of the finest things that Vinet wrote, and on themes of the highest moment. An apology, perhaps, is due from the translator for presuming to mingle his thoughts and explanations with the productions of such an author, in the form of Introduction, notes, and so forth. But the candid reader will allow, that as every author writes under peculiar circumstances, and with a view to certain readers, his works may not be so well adapted to another sphere and another class of readers. This, we think, will be found peculiarly the case with the works of Vinet, who wrote chiefly for the benefit of Swiss, French, and German readers, and who mingles in all his productions allusions and references to matters, literary, religious, and philosophical, with which comparatively few American or English readers are supposed to be familiar. Our aim has been, so to translate and so to edit the following work, that it may be really useful to general readers, and thus subserve the great end for which its devout and eloquent author lived and died.

INTRODUCTION.

Since the days of Ulric Zuingle and Theodore Beza, no theologian or preacher in Switzerland has attained a higher celebrity than Alexander Vinet; not only on account of the superior excellence of his character, and his vast attainments as a scholar, but also on account of the philosophical depth of his writings and the striking beauty and force of his diction. "Perfectly at home in the regions of pure thought," he was intimately conversant with French, German, Italian, English, and Classic literature, and astonished his contemporaries as much by the acuteness of his speculations, as by the finish and brilliancy of his style. His recent death caused a deep sensation among all classes of the community in his native land, as well as in France, England, and the United States. "He was loved," says one of his contemporaries, "respected, and admired by all. His adversaries, even, if he can be said to have had adversaries, gave him the most honorable tribute of esteem and grief on the occasion of his death. The Reformed Churches of Switzerland and France feel that they have lost one of their foremost supports. Men of learning, who also know the distinguished merit of Mr. Vinet, unite with pious persons to deplore his departure from this world."

"This universal sorrow," he adds, "is owing to the fact that Mr. Vinet joined to a high and comprehensive intellect a most benevolent heart. He was not only a writer of the first order and a philosopher endowed with the finest powers; he was also a mild and amiable man, seeking to promote good wherever it was in his power, taking pleasure in pointing out the merits rather than the defects of others. * * Thus he became one of the most honored men of the age. This union of genius and goodness is unhappily too rare. It often happens, even among Christians, that the gifts of the understanding are accompanied with a bitter or arbitrary spirit, and then our admiration is mingled with a sort of fear and distrust. But when greatness of soul is combined with the simplicity of a child (as in his case), it constitutes one of the noblest works of God."

Our attention was first called to the writings of Vinet by Dr. Merle d'Aubigné, the well-known author of the "History of the Reformation." Having, in the course of conversation, asked him concerning the published discourses of the most distinguished preachers in France and Switzerland, he particularly recommended those of Vinet, speaking of him as the *Chalmers of Switzerland.* He referred, also, to the work which he had recently published on the "Profession of Religious Convictions, and the Separation of the Church from the State," as having produced a very great sensation in that part of the world. He admitted that Vinet differed from Chalmers in some respects, but intimated that he possessed a more profoundly philosophical spirit. Every one familiar with the writings of both men, will readily allow that they resemble each other in breadth and energy of mind, originality of conception, and vigor of diction. Chalmers, we think, has more of energy and passion, but less of philosophical acumen and delicacy of perception ; more of oratorical force and affluence of imagery, but less of real beauty, perspicacity, and power of argument. His discourses resemble mountain torrents, dashing in strength and beauty amid rocks and woods, carrying everything before them, and gathering force as they leap and foam from point to point, in their progress to the sea. Vinet's, on the other hand, are like deep and beautiful rivers, passing with calm but irresistible majesty through rich and varied scenery ; now gliding around the base of some lofty mountain, then sweeping through meadows and cornfields, anon reflecting in their placid bosom some old castle, or vine-covered hill, taking villages and cities in their course, and bearing the commerce and population of the neighboring countries on their deepening and expanding tide. The diction of Chalmers is strikingly energetic, but somewhat rugged and involved, occasionally, too, rather unfinished and clumsy. Vinet's is pure and classical, pellucid as one of his own mountain lakes, and yet remarkably energetic and free in its graceful flow.

Another thing in which they differ has reference to the mode in which they develop a subject. Chalmers grasps one or two great conceptions, and expands them into a thousand beautiful and striking forms. His great power lies in making luminous and impressive the single point upon which he would fix his reader's attention, running it, like a thread of gold, through the web of his varied and exhaustless imagery. Vinet penetrates into the heart of his subject, analyzes it with care, lays it open to inspection, advances from one point to another, adds thought to thought, ilustration to illustration, till it becomes clear and familiar to the mind of the reader. His intellect is distinguished as much by its logical acumen as by its powers of illustration and ornament. He seldom repeats his thoughts in the same discourse, and rarely fails in clearness of conception and arrangement. Chalmers delights and persuades by the grandeur of his ideas and the fervor of his language, but he adds little to the stock of our information. He abounds in repetitions, and is not unfrequently confused in his arrangement, and somewhat negligent in his statements. Though eloquent and powerful, his discourses are not remarkably instructive. But this is not the case with those of Vinet. While they charm by their beauty, and convince by their persuasive power, they abound in original views, and lead the mind into fresh channels of reflection and feeling. While one is satisfied with reading the productions of the great Scottish divine once or twice, he recurs again and again to those of his Swiss compeer. They abound in "the seeds of things," and possess a remarkable power to quicken and expand the mind. On this account they ought to be read, or rather studied, slowly and deliberately. Like the works of John Howe, which Robert Hall was accustomed to read so frequently, they will repay many perusals.

Both of these distinguished men were truly evangelical in their theological views; they developed with equal power the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel, and in their respective spheres did much to promote evangelical religion among the higher and more cultivated circles of society. Both laid their great literary attainments under contribution to defend and illustrate the religion of the Cross, and devoted much time and attention to those great moral and politico-ecclesiastical questions which agitate the whole Christian world. On most of these questions the views of Vinet were more thorough and consistent, and aimed at a complete separation of the Church from the State; a result, however, to which Chalmers came in practice, and which, had he lived, he would unquestionably have reached even in theory. Both possessed great simplicity and earnestness of character. Alike free from cant and pretension, and apparently unconscious of their greatness, they were distinguished by a rare depth and beauty of character. They were men of genius and men of God. As a writer, Vinet led the movement in France and Switzerland against formalism and scepticism in the Church, and particularly against the union of Church and State. Chalmers did the same, at least by means of action, in Scotland and England. Both were professors in the colleges of their native lands; both seceded from the national church, but continued, by the common consent of the community, to occupy important places as teachers of theology. They wrote largely and successfully on the subject of moral science, in its connections with Christianity, and were called, especially by their published discourses, to address men of high station and cultivated minds.

As a preacher, Vinet was more calm in manner, more comprehensive in thought, more subtle in analysis, more felicitous in diction than his Scottish compeer; but he never reached his impassioned fervor and practical power. He was better acquainted with the French and German philosophy, which he had studied carefully in the original sources. He had read more extensively and thought more deeply upon all the fundamental problems which agitate the thinkers of continental Europe, and he possessed naturally a keener and more discriminating intellect; but he could lay no claim to the fervid enthusiasm, the practical wisdom, the business tact, the all-embracing energy of that prince of preachers. Vinet regards every subject in its fundamental relations. He thinks patiently and profoundly. With a vigorous and delicate imagination and great power of expression, he is serene, self-possessed, and philosophical. His words are carefully weighed; and to those who can fully enter into his spirit they possess a clearness and precision, combined with a grandeur and beauty, at once surprising and delightful. But their very precision, more philosophical than popular, in connection with their unusual depth and fulness of import, somewhat bewilder common minds, those, especially, not versed in philosophical inquiries, and thus invest them with an air of difficulty and obscurity. These peculiarities are seen to some extent in a few of his discourses, but it is in his dissertation on religious convictions, and especially in his critical and philosophical essays, that they appear in their perfection. One must be conversant with these to form a just idea of the depth and grandeur of his conceptions, the force and delicacy of his language. Chalmers, on the other hand, with all his majesty and force is plain and practical, and even somewhat loose and declamatory. He is seldom if ever obscure, except from defective reasoning or inadequate expression. The stream of his eloquence rushes bright and strong under the eye of all. Its course is easily marked as it sparkles and foams under the light of heaven. The eloquence of Vinet is not only different in kind and aspect, but seems to take a different course. Deep and strong, it only seems obscure—reflecting a strange spiritual radiance, borrowed from afar, it glides in many winding turns, as if among Alpine solitudes; now mirroring the glacier peaks in its calm depths, now passing under the shadow of some frowning precipice, and anon gathering itself into one of those dark-blue lakes which lie encircled amid the everlasting hills. Chalmers goes forth in the daylight of this every-day world, "rejoicing as a strong man to run a race." Vinet is seen gazing upon the stars in the depths of the far heavens. The one adores Jehovah amid the kindling glories of the sunrise, the other in the hallowed shadows of the night. The latter is a philosopher, profound and reverent, the other an orator, energetic and free. Chalmers sways the minds of the people, and works a mighty reformation in the Church of God, Vinet illumines the souls of thinkers, and mingles, like the star of morning, with the light of heaven. Both died about the same time, when they seemed to be needed the most by their respective countries, and the Church of Christ; and now they worship together in the temple not made with hands, while "the long radiance" of their genius and piety lingers behind them, to stimulate and cheer their fellow-pilgrims on earth.

It is but justice to say that Chalmers as a preacher was more popular than Vinet, and that his writings thus far have secured a wider circulation. Vinet, however, must become popular, if not with the mass, yet with the thoughtful and cultivated wherever he is known. His reputation in Switzerland and France is very high, even among mere literary men; he is also well known and highly esteemed in Germany, where his writings have been translated and read with much interest. His great work on the "Manifestation," or "Profession of Religious Convictions," has been translated into German and English, in the one case by Dr. Volkmann, in the other by Charles Theodore Jones, and has attracted much attention, particularly in Germany, where the way was prepared for its reception by the two works of Dr. Rettig,* and Pastor Wolff,† on the same subject. It has exerted a great and obvious influence on the mind of Count Gasparin, whose writings on the subject of religious liberty are destined, we think, to produce the most salutary results. Indeed, this work of Vinet is greatly admired on the continent of Europe, except perhaps by some of the friends of the alliance of Church and State. The great number of reviews and replies it has called out, is a striking proof of its value. We are apprehensive, however, that the English version gives but an inadequate conception of its force and eloquence. Faithful and laborious it undoubtedly is, but it does not reach the strength and beauty of the original.

"There are in Vinet's mind and writings," says an accomplished American scholar, "many things to remind a reader of John Foster. There is the same searching analysis and profound thought, united to a flowing eloquence to which, generally, Foster can lay no claim."‡ The remark is just, though Foster is greatly inferior to Vinet in acquired knowledge, and especially in an intimate familiarity with general literature and speculative philosophy. Generally speaking, also, Vinet is more genial and hopeful, and takes a wider and more discursive range of thought. It is questionable, however, whether he quite equals the English essayist in the complete originality of his conceptions, and the racy vigor of his language. Vinet has borrowed more from Fenelon, Pascal, and the Port Royalists, than Foster has from any writer whatever. Still, in philosophical depth, as well as in delicacy, precision, and beauty of style, the palm must be given to Vinet. The thoughts of Foster, to borrow a figure of Robert Hall's, are presented to us in the shape of rich and beautiful masses of bullion; Vinet's are wrought into finished and elegant forms.

It is evident, however, from a perusal of Vinet's writings, as

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* Die Freie Protestantischen Kirche; Giessen, 1832.

† Zukunft der Protestantischen Kirche in Deutschland; 1838.

‡ Dr. William R. Williams.

Sainte Beuve, a distinguished contemporary critic suggests, that he sympathized more fully with Pascal than with any other writer. Inferior in originality and force to that prodigy of genius, who may be said to have invented geometry for himself, and at the same time created a rich and vigorous style of writing, which has left its marked impress upon the literature of France, Vinet has the same power of abstract thinking, the same distrust of philosophic theories, the same sense of "the vanity and grandeur of man," and the same majestic and beautiful style. Free from the superstitions and doubts of Pascal, he worships with him in the same solemn temple, trusts in the same Redeemer, and longs for the same perfection. Their "thoughts" on religion wonderfully harmonize; and it is really beautiful to see how, in this high union, Catholic and Protestant are blended. Indeed, Vinet is Pascal in a softened light, with a stronger faith, and a deeper peace.

The following are the principal events in the life of our author, so far as we have been able to ascertain them.

Alexander Vinet was born 17th June, 1797, in Lausanne, capital of the Canton Vaud, Switzerland, certainly one of the most beautiful cities in the world, lying as it does upon the high and sloping bank of Lake Leman, or the Lake of Geneva, adorned with squares and gardens, fine edifices and delightful promenades; in sight, also, of the high Alps with their snow-clad peaks, and in the neighborhood of Vevay, Chillon, Villeneuve, and other places of classic and romantic interest; at one time the residence of Zuingle and Beza, and the chosen dwelling-place of Gibbon, the historian of Rome. An Academy of considerable celebrity has existed here since 1536,* which, in 1806, was elevated into an Academic Institute (what in this country would perhaps be called a University), with fourteen professors and a rector. It was also re-organized in 1838, and separated, if we mistake not, from all immediate connection with the national church. From its origin Lausanne has been distinguished for its high literary culture, its refined and agreeable society. It is the residence of many foreigners.

Destined to the ministry by his father, who regarded the clerical profession as the most desirable and honorable of all, Vinet was placed at the Academy of his native city, and pursued the ordinary course of studies, occupied, however, more with literature than theology. Fortunately his mind was attracted, at an early period, to the study of moral science, for which he possessed a decided genius, and which exerted a very favorable influence, not only upon his theological inquiries, but upon his religious character.

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* Founded by the celebrated reformer, Viret, one of the ablest and most eloquent preachers of the Swiss Reformation.

At the age of twenty, two years before the legal termination of his studies, he accepted a place as professor of the French language and literature, in the Establishment of Public Instruction or University, at Bâle (German, Bâsle), capital of the canton of that name, a fine old city on the banks of the Rhine, distinguished for its Cathedral and University, once the residence of Oecolampadius, the friend of Zuinglius, and one of the most eloquent preachers of the Reformation, and also the burial-place of the celebrated Erasmus. Such an appointment is an incontestable evidence of the superiority of Vinet's talents, and the high reputation for scholarship he had acquired even at that early period of his life. He made a visit to Lausanne in 1819, in order to submit to the requisite examinations and receive ordination as a minister of the gospel. He returned to Bâle, and continued there till 1837, as professor of the French language and literature. It was during his residence in this place that he published the most of his earlier writings, and established his reputation as a preacher. In 1830 he published two discourses, the one on the *Intolerance of the Gospel*, the other on the *Tolerance of the Gospel*, which attracted great attention. They were prefaced in the following style, furnishing a beautiful specimen of the simplicity and modesty of his character. "Persons advanced in Christian knowledge will find, we fear, little nutriment in these discourses. Nor is it to them we have felt ourselves called to speak; it would better become us to hear them. We have forbidden our words to transcend the limits of our personal emotions; an artificial heat would not be salutary. Nevertheless we hope that to many persons we have spoken a word in season; and we cast it into the world, commending it to the Divine blessing, which can make some fruits of holiness and peace to spring from it for the edification of the Christian church."

In this brief preface a peculiarity of all our author's productions, and especially of his discourses, reveals itself. They are "born, not made," originated, not manufactured. His soul was never cast into any artificial mould. It has great clearness, elasticity, and strength. He is therefore entirely free from hackneyed phrases, and stereotyped modes of thought. His discourses are drawn fresh from his own profound spirit. While perusing them, you feel as if you were listening, not to the mere preacher, but to the deep thinker and the man of God. He never transcends the limits of his own personal experience; but that being the experience at once of a great and a good man, it possesses a peculiar warmth and beauty. "One must breathe the spirit," says Pindar, "before he can speak."—"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," is the testimony of Jesus Christ. Our author, we think, understands this, and hence approaches as near as possible to the model which John Foster has in his mind when he insists so strongly on the necessity, in evangelical writings, of naturalness and entire freedom from cant. Indeed Vinet distinctly acknowledges the great importance of this quality, and urges the same views as those of Foster's Essay on the *Aversion of Men of Taste to Evangelical Religion.* In the Introduction to a Volume of his Discourses, he says:—"Feeble, I address myself to the feeble. I give to them the milk which has nourished myself. When some of us become stronger than the rest, we will together demand the bread of the strong. But I have thought that those who are at the commencement of their course need some one who, placing himself in their point of view, should speak to them less as a preacher than as a man who precedes them by scarcely a single step, and who is anxious to turn to their account the little advance he has made upon them.

"It is perhaps desirable that every one, according to the measure of knowledge which has been given him, should labor for the evangelization of the world. In the mumber of those whom I may be permitted to call candidates of the truth, there are perhaps some souls that are particularly attracted by the kind of preaching I have employed, and employed without choice; for I could not choose it. I say *perhaps*, and nothing more; but what I affirm with more confidence is, that it is important that each one should show himself such as he is, and not affect gifts he has not received.

"I believe I am not mistaken in saying that among those who speak or write on divine things there is an exaggerated craving for uniformity. I know indeed, that community of convictions and hopes, the habit of deriving instruction from the same sources, the intimate nature of the relations that subsist in Christian society, must have produced, as their result, a unity of thoughts, of intellectual habits, and even, to a certain extent, of expression; but while we ought to admire this unity when it is produced, we ought to make no effort to produce it. The generous freedom of Christianity is repugnant to that timid deference to a conventional language and a vain orthodoxy of tone and style; nor does sincerity permit us to adopt, as an expression of our individuality, a common type, the imprint of which is always, in some degree, foreign to us; the interest of our religious development demands that we should not conceal from ourselves our real condition; and nothing could be more fitted to conceal it from ourselves than the involuntary habit of disguising it to others. In fine, the beauty of the evangelical work, and even unity itself, demand that each nature should manifest itself with its own characteristics. Confidence is felt in unity, when it produces itself under an aspect of variety; community of principle is rendered more striking by diversity of forms; while uniformity being necessarily artificial, is always more or less suspected, and involuntarily suggests the idea of constraint or dissimulation."

It was probably in Bâle that Vinet formed those decidedly spiritual views of religion, so clearly developed in all his discourses and other writings. In this place, an evangelical influence in greater or less degree, has existed ever since the time of the Reformation. The labors of Oecolampadius, whom the good people of the city were accustomed to call their bishop, the occasional presence and preaching of the great Swiss reformer, Zuinglius, the decided piety and activity of several of their most distinguished pastors and preachers in subsequent times, and more recently the prevalence of a noble missionary spirit, have conspired to impress an evangelical character upon the place. It has of course suffered, like all other cities in Switzerland and Germany, from the prevalence of rationalism, formalism, and infidelity; still the fire of divine love has continued to burn upon its altars with a pure, and we hope, brightening flame.

It was in Bâle also that Vinet composed his "Memoir in favor of Liberty of Worship," which obtained the prize offered by the Society of Christian Morals in Paris. This production, which displays the vigor and enthusiasm of his mind, as well as his intense aversion to all intolerance and injustice, had a great circulation in France, among intelligent men. M. Guizot, chairman of the Committee of Award, rendered a public tribute to the piety and talent of the author.

In 1832, he gave to the public the first volume of his Discourses on Religious Subjects. His "Nouveaux Discours" appeared at a subsequent period. As they were written under particular circumstances and addressed to a particular class of men, they possess a character of their own, differing from anything in the whole range of pulpit literature. "I would not," says Felicè, "offer these Discourses as models to be followed by all preachers; Mr. Vinet himself does not. I say only that they deserve to be carefully studied by all enlightened men.

"In general, great pulpit orators try to be popular; and this is right. Christianity is not a science addressing itself only to some choice minds; it is a religion revealed for all, necessary for all, and which seems to have been designed for the small even more than the great. '*To the poor the Gospel is preached*,' said Jesus Christ. A preacher then conforms to the spirit of the Gospel, when he adapts himself to the capacity of the hearers; and the more accessible he is to the comprehension of the humble, the better he attains his end. But there is no rule without exceptions, and in some circumstances, the Christian orator is called to fathom the obscurest depths of philosophy. It depends especially upon the character of the hearers. It depends, also, upon the obstacles which the preacher must combat, and the effects he aims to produce.

"On these principles we must judge the Religious Discourses of Mr. Vinet. They are, properly speaking, doctrinal, moral, and philosophical dissertations. He delivered them at Bâle, before a select audience composed specially of professors and students. He had before him men accustomed to profound thought, and who felt doubts upon some points of the Christian revelation. His duty was to satisfy these internal wants. He could, without fear of not being understood, lift himself to the sublime regions of speculative thought, and encounter objections which are happily unknown to the mass of Christians.

"Considered in this point of view, nothing would seem more admirable than the Discourses of Mr. Vinet. What copiousness and what originality of thought! what novelty in the illustrations of doctrine and morals! what logic, at once sound and vigorous! what warmth and pungency in the style! To read merely the title of these meditations you would believe, often, that the speaker only discussed some common-place; but if you go farther, you see with surprise that upon the tritest subjects he has found things which no other had discovered before him. He is truly an orator *sui generis;* he imitates no one, and I doubt if any one should imitate him.

"This volume of Discourses had in France many readers. It did good particularly to those reflecting men who, without having distinct religious opinions, profess to believe something, and are known for their irreproachable conduct in the eyes of the world. Mr. Vinet, with his philosophical views and his amiable qualities, exactly met their wishes; and more than one literary man, once a sceptic, was led by him to the cross of God the Saviour."

In these Discourses, as in all Vinet's writings, we discover a remarkable combination of dissimilar qualities. But this is accounted for by a reference to the peculiar genius and circumstances of the author. A native of Switzerland, which is more allied, in its spirit and character, to Germany than to France, and intimately familiar with classic as well as English and German literature, Vinet unites the greatest subtlety and depth with all the grace and vivacity which distinguish the genius of France. It is surprising what elasticity and strength, what grace and grandeur, the French language assumes under his plastic hand.* So much is this the case, that it has been affirmed that no one has used the French tongue with more force and elegance since the days of Pascal. Contemplative, enthusiastic, and poetical, his language glows with as much grandeur and picturesque beauty as the scenery of his native land.

The citizens of the Canton Vaud several times requested Vinet to return to his native city. They offered him any place that he might wish. They told him that Bâle was not his home, and that he ought to devote his talents to his own country, and other such things. For a long time he resisted their solicitations. He was attached to Bâle by ties of gratitude and habit, and had many friends there; he loved "the calm, modest, patriarchal life" he had spent there for many years. But the solicitations of the Vaudese finally prevailed, and in 1837 he became professor of practical theology in Lausanne. Students flocked from France and Switzerland to hear his instructive and eloquent lectures, and were inspired with the highest love and enthusiasm for their teacher. By his side were other teachers of merit, " but the impulse, the incitement to study, came from Vinet."

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* The French language is spoken in the Cantons of Bâsle, Neufchatel, Geneva, and Vaud. Most of the people understand German, but they generally use French.

He occupied this station for several years, but he found it necessary at last to declare his convictions on the impropriety of the union of the Church with the State. His book upon this subject produced quite an excitement, and engaged strongly the attention of thinking men both in Switzerland and France. In consequence of his views upon this subject he felt great scruples of conscience about keeping his place. His friends, however, urged him for their sakes to retain it. At this juncture a revolution broke out in the Canton. Evangelical ministers were persecuted, and compelled to leave their place in the established church. Vinet resigned his office as professor of theology, and was appointed professor of French literature. He was afterwards deposed by an infidel, truth-hating government, who in the abused name of liberty were guilty of shameful excesses. In company, therefore, with a noble band of self-denying ministers and members of the established church, who could not bear the impositions of a despotic mob, who had assumed the reins of government, he went forth to found a free church amid the hills and vales of the Canton Vaud. Vinet was the heart and soul of this movement, and had the satisfaction before his death of seeing a church formed in which its ministers and members would be free to worship God according to the dictates of their consciences, yielding allegiance to none but Jesus Christ. Many tears were shed by the old pastors on leaving their homes and portions of their flocks, and although some faltered and failed, a noble host went out with their weeping families and friends, not knowing whither they went. The conduct of the government, which happens to be radical and infidel, consisting chiefly of associationists, rationalists, and demagogues, has been most atrocious. In the name of liberty, they have not hesitated to persecute these noble spirits; they went so far even as to threaten Vinet with stoning and imprisonment! But " wisdom is justified of all her children," and the persecuted ministers and members of the Free Church, with a calm decision and heroic self-sacrifice worthy of the martyrs, preferred to obey God rather than man, and bade defiance to the miserable government of the mob, who alone claimed to be free. Their record is on high, and their memory will be fragrant when the names of their persecutors are rotten in the dust. All Switzerland and the continent of Europe will yet own their power; generations yet unborn will rise up and call them blessed. Man must be free. The Church of God shall be free. The decree has gone forth from the court of heaven, and no power on earth can prevent its fulfilment. "The dominion and the greatness of the dominion under the whole heaven, shall be given to the saints of the Most High God."

As a preacher, Vinet was rather solemn and impressive than striking and vehement. His personal appearance was not peculiarly imposing, though dignified and agreeable. It possessed, however, a charm to those who knew him intimately, and well corresponded to his calm and lofty genius. He was rather tall, somewhat bony and muscular, but not stout, with a slight stoop in his gait, as if he were meditating some serious or agreeable subject. His complexion was tawny as an Indian's, his mouth firm and benevolent in its expression, eyes dark and lustrous, forehead rather broad than high, though by no means deficient in height, and surmounted by dark, clustering hair. The whole aspect of the countenance was honest, benevolent, and intellectual. His voice was low, his manner calm and deliberate. The flush upon his face and the gleaming of his eye, alone revealed the majestic energy of the indwelling spirit, uttering its profound and oracular thoughts.*

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* "The printed sermons of Mr. Vinet do not give a complete idea of his ordinary manner of preaching. He had a more popular method for small assemblies, for familiar meetings. There, he was no longer the lofty and abstruse philosopher; he was the humble Christian, simple in his expositions, always intelligible in his terms, and who, like a brother or a friend, takes his hearers by the hand to lead them to Christ. Mr. Vinet, in these ordinary circumstances, did not write his sermons; he was accustomed to preach with notes written on a small piece of paper. His voice had something mild and penetrating. He made few gestures, kept a calm attitude, and did not aim at bursts of eloquence. He was sometimes animated, but with moderation. He did not run after the pathetic. He believed, with reason, that vehemence carried to excess diminishes the authority of the sacred orator. Moderation also indicates strength; and the preacher who preserves always the control over himself will produce, in the end, deeper impressions than the impetuous declaimer. It is perhaps well that there are some *revival preachers* who excite violent emotions. But they are not the best models of Christian eloquence, though they

In his intercourse with his family and friends, he was kind and gentle; and in all his deportment showed himself at once a great and a good man. He was distinguished as much for simplicity as dignity of character, for profound humility as for exalted worth. Apparently as unconscious of his greatness as a star is of its light, he shed upon all around him a benignant radiance. In a word, he walked with God. This controlled his character, this shaped his manners. Steeped in holy love, he could not be otherwise than serene and gentle.

While resident at Bâle and Lausanne, Vinet made frequent contributions of a critical and philosophical kind, to the *Semeur*, and other periodicals. Several of his works were crowned (*couronné*) as the expression is, by the French Society of Christian Morals. He also published a volume of philosophical criticisms, in part derived from those he had contributed to the Semeur, in which he discusses with uncommon depth and subtlety, but in language of exquisite clearness and force, some of the highest problems in philosophy and morals, and dissects the maxims and theories of such men as Montaigne, Voltaire, Rochefoucauld, Jouffroy, Cousin, Quinet, and Lamartine.* His fine genius for philosophical speculation, in connection with his strong common sense, and his unwavering faith in the Gospel, are here strikingly developed. Perfectly at home in the region of pure

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obtain, perhaps, more applause than others. Mr. Vinet never was ambitious of this ephemeral popularity."

* "M. Vinet," says the Semeur, "has exercised for sixteen years his criticism, at once learned and brilliant, on all the productions of our great writers. His articles united would make an admirable course of contemporary literature in a Christian point of view. To be more sure of not mistaking the nature of the moral errors and false hopes to which he wished to oppose the divine remedy, M. Vinet studied them in the works of the most illustrious representatives of modern thought. Just before his death, he had proposed to continue his critical series by a review of Lamartine's History of the Girondins." In 1846, he published a pamphlet of seventy-one pages, entitled 'Du Socialisme considéré dans son Principe.' "It is a fundamental and very able discussion of a question which is now deeply agitating society in Switzerland and in other parts of Europe. Its most melancholy developments have perhaps been witnessed in the Canton of Vaud. Its abettors, ignorant of Christianity or utterly hostile to it, unacquainted with the solemn lessons of history, or despising them, appeal to man's social nature, to a species of levelling fraternization, 'to the identification of man and society,' as a sovereign remedy for the ills which afflict the race."—*Dr. Edwards.*

Since his death, his "Evangelical Studies" and his "Studies on Pascal" have been published.

abstractions, he yet possesses the power of clear and eloquent expression, " giving to airy nothings a local habitation and a name." With eagle glance, he detects the subtlest fallacies of his opponents, and lays down, in brief and expressive phrase, those great and fundamental principles of belief, without which all our speculations are only visions of cloudland. Vinet was neither a spiritualist nor a sensationalist. He belonged neither to the school of Locke nor of Kant, of Hegel nor of Cousin. He did not reject altogether the German " spiritual philosophy," but he was very far from accepting it. It was too vague, too dogmatic, too extravagant for his clear, well-balanced intellect. Moreover, he distinguished clearly between philosophy and religion—between the speculations of the one and the revelations of the other. While conceding all that was due to science, he bowed with reverence before the word of God. He brought all the spoils of reason to the Cross, and kneeling there as an humble suppliant, looked up into the face of the dying Saviour, and exclaimed, " Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." His *heart* understood that work of love, and his *intellect* grew still and reverent under its influence. In all his works, this element of his character appears predominant. It is the one thing which gave unity to his life and labors. In a word, he was a sincere and humble Christian. His mighty soul was laid, all throbbing with thought and feeling, on the warm bosom of the Son of God. Renouncing " his own righteousness,'' relying upon Christ alone, and consecrating his attainments on the altar of Christian love, he rejoiced in the abounding grace of God, and lay down to die in the calm and blessed hope of a glorious immortality. His decease took place somewhat suddenly, on the 4th of May, 1847, before he was quite fifty years of age, at Clarens, near Lausanne, just on the margin of Lake Leman, whither he had been sent by his physicians. It was the death of a Christian, calm and beautiful as the last rays of sunset upon the mountains of his native land.

Vinet's last lecture was on these words of our Saviour: " I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work thou gavest me to do. And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self." The seriousness, the elevation, the humility with which he expounded these words, the fervor with which at the close he prayed to God that they might be fulfilled in himself and in his hearers, seemed almost like a presentiment that he was near the end of his course, and that God was about to remove him from the evil to come. His funeral took place on Thursday, May sixth; his pupils claiming the honor of being the bearers, sang at his tomb "a hymn of sorrow and of hope." The Rev. William Monod then made a short address; a pupil 'uttered a last adieu to the mortal dust, and said to the glorified spirit, Thanks, we shall meet again!'

Most of the Essays and Miscellanies we have translated, are addressed particularly to that large class of cultivated minds who have some prepossessions in favor of Christianity, but who, from the influence of latent scepticism, do not yield their hearts to its direct and all-controlling influence. This circumstance, as already suggested, stamps upon them a peculiar character. It has rendered them at once profound and practical. But it has given rise to some inconvenience in the use of words, as the author himself acknowledges. For example, the words *reason*, *nature*, *life*, are occasionally used in their strict and philosophical sense, then again in their more loose and general import. At one time, reason is recommended and exalted as the gift of God, and the criterion of truth; at another, it is contemned and rejected as an impostor and a cheat. In the one case, he evidently refers to reason legitimate and true, occupying its own sphere, and performing its proper work; in the other, to reason perverted and false, transcending the limits which God has assigned it, assuming extravagant pretensions, and trampling upon the plainest principles of science and revelation. Indeed, as the author suggests, the word in these instances is used in two different senses. "So far as the words *nature* and *reason* designate that foundation of moral and intellectual truth which we carry within us, those universal and immutable principles to which all systems appeal, which are admitted in the most opposite theories, and on the common ground of which opponents the most decided are compelled to re-unite, at least for a moment, *nature* and *reason* merit the homage I have rendered them; for if, in my discussions, I had not set out from this given point, whence could I set out? But so far as reason and nature, instead of receiving the light of God, instead of appealing to it, and using its rays to illuminate their pathway, pretend to create that light, or to speak more exactly, so far as it is pretended, in the name of nature and reason, which disavow such an undertaking, to communicate to man an illumination, and a power, which must come from on high, I set myself against that abuse. And if, in conforming to a usage more oratorical than philosophical, I designate that abuse by the name of those powers which give occasion to it, if I call *nature* and *reason* those pretensions which are raised in the name of nature and reason, I confide in the attention and good faith of my readers, without concealing what the severity of philosophical language might demand from me." With this explanation, every intelligent reader will make the distinctions, clearly indicated by the spirit and scope of the author's reasoning.

"Philosophers and men of the world," says Vinet, in the introduction to the first volume of his Discourses, "invite us, in some sense, to meet them; having lingered long in the precincts of philosophy, they approach towards the sanctuary. The secret of life, its final word, is demanded from all quarters; and should we, who know that final word, be avaricious of it; should we refuse to speak it, because we must speak it to philosophers in a language less familiar to us than to them? That word is of all languages; it is susceptible of all forms; it has a thousand different expressions; for it is found at the termination of all questions, at the close of all discussions, at the summit of all ideas. Long or short, direct or indirect, every road is true that conducts to the foot of the cross."

The author, however, modestly disclaims all pretension of "preaching Christ in the Areopagus, or entering the lists with the doctors," but adds, that he had involuntarily turned towards "that numerous class of cultivated men who, educated in the bosom of Christendom, and imbued, if the expression may be allowed, with Christian prepossessions, feebly struggle either against their own heart, frightened by the solemn aspect of Christianity, or against that too general impression that Christianity, so necessary, so beautiful, so consoling, cannot be justified in the eyes of reason."

As to the first difficulty, he proceeds to say, "The Christian preacher will not consider it his duty to remove it, by abstracting anything from the serious character of the Gospel. On the contrary, he is gratified to find this prepossession established; it is one error less to eradicate. The fear which the gospel has produced is the commencement of adhesion. It is this very seriousness which the minister of the Gospel ought to cultivate to maturity. As to the second difficulty, which turns," says he, "on the old opposition between faith and reason, he makes the following admirable remarks.

"He who speaks of revealed religion, speaks of a system which reason cannot discover, because it is necessary that God himself should communicate it to us by supernatural means. The Christian, then, rejects reason, so far as it professes to produce or create the truth. He does, in his sphere, what the true philosopher does in his; for the latter admits, by virtue of an internal revelation, facts for the discovery of which reason is of no use. The philosopher has not to demonstrate, *a priori*, the facts of internal revelation, a revelation without antecedents, and anterior to all acquisitions. The theologian, on his part, recognizes, in revealed facts, an acquisition superior to all acquisitions; he no longer proves these facts, for to prove them would be to create them. By acting thus he does not deny reason; on the contrary, he makes use of it. And this is the place to observe, that reason, that is to say, the nature of things, in whatever point of view we place ourselves, will always be to us the criterion of truth and the basis of faith. The truth without us must always be measured and compared with the truth within us; with that intellectual conscience, which, as well as the moral conscience, is invested with sovereignty, gives judgments, knows remorse; with those irresistible axioms which we carry within us, which form a part of our nature, and are the support and groundwork of all our thoughts; in a word with *reason.* In this sense, every doctrine of revelation is held to be reasonable; which, however, is not to say that every doctrine is held to be accessible to reason; nothing hinders it from receiving that which surpasses it. Moreover, beyond this inviolable limit, the theologian finds space and employment for his reason; he even applies it, in two different ways, to the facts of the supernatural revelation he announces. First of all, he develops the proofs of the authenticity of such a revelation; then he applies himself to prove its necessity as well as its harmony with the immutable nature of the human heart—in a word, the perfect *reasonableness* of a system which *reason* has not discovered. Nay, the farther this system is removed in its principles from the discoveries of human reason, the more does its coincidence with it become striking and admirable. Thus, in Christian preaching, reason abdicates on one point, but only on one; it is satisfied not to comprehend, not to be able to construct, *a priori*, the principal facts of Christianity, and transfers them to the heart, which embraces them, elaborates and vivifies them; but it finds, in a neighboring sphere, the rich indemnities we have just indicated. By itself alone it cannot form the Christian, but it prepares him; it conducts from the natural to the supernatural, those whom the powerful energy of the Holy Spirit has not transported, without intermediate steps, into the high sphere of the faith of the heart. Thus the essential opposition which is proclaimed between reason and faith has no real existence; they are two powers reigning in two distinct spheres. Those, therefore, who would make Christianity faith alone, and those who claim that it should be reason alone, are equally mistaken; it is both; it takes possession at once of thought and feeling; it withdraws from examination, and yields itself to it by turns; it has its darkness and its light. The theologian is bound to show himself well informed; he ought to conciliate to the gospel the respect of reason itself; but he ought by no means to place the gospel on the same level with reason; nay, he ought carefully to guard against this.

"Between the two extremes we have exhibited, the rationalist preachers appear to seek a middle ground; but he would be very simple who did not perceive that one of these extremes attracts them powerfully, and claims them wholly. How ungrateful, too, their task! To reduce everything to the principles of nature is evidently their pretension; to make reason usurp the place of faith, to extirpate from religion, by little and little, everything serious, is the obvious aim of their labors. But when they have succeeded, they will find themselves, like ordinary philosophers, face to face with mystery. What have they gained? Absolutely nothing; except to have taken a longer and more expensive route. I suspect unbelieving logicians find the rationalists indifferent philosophers.

"Is it perhaps that in rationalizing the gospel, they have found a system more perfect than those which philosophy can produce? As to certainty, their system possesses nothing more than any other; as to intrinsic value, they might find one as good and plausible, without making use of the gospel. That meagre Christianity which they put in the place of the true, has nothing peculiar or individual, nothing which elevates it above the theories of mere reason. They imagine that by retrenching the facts of a transcendental sphere, that is to say, supernatural facts, they are merely drawing the blade from its scabbard; let them say rather, they have cast away the blade, and that the hilt only remains in their hands. Stripped of the great fact of expiation, and all that cluster of ideas connected with it, what, I ask, is Christianity? For ordinary minds, an ordinary morality; for others, an abyss of inconsistencies.*

"I am persuaded that true philosophers will find that evangelical preachers have taken a position more solid and philosophical. And we attach value to this suffrage; for if philosophy as a science does not inspire us with much confidence, so far as it relates to the solution of the great problem of life, it is not so with philosophy as a method, or with the philosophical spirit. The art of abstracting, of generalizing, of classifying principles, will never be disdained by enlightened Christian preachers; besides, there is a Christian philosophy. Retained within certain limits, it has its use in preaching, and even in life.

"If it is a means, it ought to be employed. The times are ominous. Society is evidently in a state of crisis. Never was the impotence of human wisdom, to consolidate the repose of nations and the welfare of humanity, more completely proved. Philosophy, deserting in despair its ancient methods, is abandoning itself to mysticism. In its need of some other light than its own, it has recourse to revelations, it is giving itself things to believe; it will believe them so long as it thinks it has invented them. It is ours to point out to it what has never entered the heart of man—ours to render it more and more sensible of that obscure want which begins to have some consciousness of itself, that longing to attach reason to faith, and science to something revealed."

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* A striking evidence of this is found in the following passage from Lessing, a distinguished German critic, but unfortunately a sceptic on the subject of Christianity, as quoted by Dr. Pye Smith, in his Scripture Testimony to the Messiah, vol. iii. p. 236. Speaking of the liberal or rationalist divines of his country, he says, "Under the pretence of making us rational Christians, they have made us most irrational philosophers. * * I agree with you that our old religious system is false, but I cannot say, as you do, that it is a botch-work of half philosophy and smatterings of knowledge. I know nothing in the world that more drew out and exercised a fine intellect. A botch-work of smatterings and half philosophy is that system of religion which people now want to set up in the place of the old one; and with far more invasion upon reason and philosophy than the old one ever pretended to. If Christ is not the TRUE GOD, the Mohammedan religion is indisputably far better than the Christian, and Mohammed himself was incomparably a greater and more honorable man than Jesus Christ; for he was more truth-telling, more circumspect in what he said, and more zealous for the honor of the one and only God, than Christ was, who, if he did not exactly give himself out for God, yet at least said a hundred two-meaning things to lead simple people to think so; while Mohammed could never be charged with a single instance of double-dealing in this way." How true it is, that to abstract the doctrines of the Godhead and atonement of Jesus Christ from the New Testament, is to leave it an *abyss of inconsistencies!* T.

That there is a Christian philosophy, a religion of God, as far superior to all human philosophies and human religions as the heavens are higher than the earth, no believer in divine revelation can doubt. It is not, however, a speculation or a theory, but a system of absolute and authoritative truth, so simple and so practical that all, even the unlettered peasant and the degraded slave, can receive it and apply it as the power of God unto salvation. After rejecting with contempt the *wisdom* or *philosophy* of this world, the apostle Paul adds: "Howbeit, we speak wisdom (*sophia*) among them that are perfect, yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, which come to naught; but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery." That is to say, this philosophy, or religion of God, is a revelation from above, or the development by God himself of what otherwise would be a mystery or secret, a philosophy, therefore, of original and positive truths, a definite, absolute, authoritative philosophy. It is thence to be received, not as a deduction of reason, but as an inspiration from on high, a doctrine altogether peculiar, altogether divine, "the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world to our glory;—for it is written, Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." These things are the original facts spoken of by our author, as equivalent in authority to the great intuitive truths which all philosophers admit without proof, and antecedent to all speculation. Of such revealed facts, philosophy has never dreamed. Her eye has never seen them. Her ear has never heard them. Her soul has never conceived aught even resembling them. They are hidden from the world entirely. For what man, to quote the language of St. Paul, knoweth the things of man, save the spirit of man that is in him? And who but the Spirit of God knows the things of God? Man may know himself; man can alone know what passes in his own interior nature. No being in the universe, but God and himself, can know the facts of his own mental experience. But while man may be conversant with his own mind, he cannot, in the same sense, be conversant with the mind of God. Therefore the Spirit of God must give us a religion, in other words, reveal to us the mind of God. It is as impossible for man to give us a perfect religion, as it is for one born blind to give us the knowledge of colors. It is true that man is made in the image of God; and he may thence infer, in a general way, that God is an intelligent, designing, and governing Being, and that he will be controlled by the principles of righteousness and benevolence; but a finite mind can never be the gauge of one that is infinite. No creature can take upon himself to reveal the designs, and mark out the conduct of his Creator, in all the possible cases in which it may be necessary for him to interpose in the affairs of mankind. Man may perfectly manifest himself, but he cannot perfectly manifest God. It would be an infinite presumption for him to announce the principles on which the Almighty will dispose of imperfect and sinful beings, and what provision he will make for them in the everlasting future. This is a matter pertaining to the Mind or Spirit of God; it is a subject for an exclusive and authoritative revelation. "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Holy Spirit." Hence the religion of God, or Christianity, is not a deduction, but a testimony, not a system of opinions, but a manifestation of truth. The natural man, that is, the uninspired or unenlightened man, cannot know, cannot discover, "the things" of such a revelation; for they are spiritually discerned. They shine only in their own light, can be seen only in their own light. Properly speaking, they cannot be proved, they do not need to be proved.* Like the sun, or the stars of heaven, they need only to be seen. They decline all attestation and support from man's philosophy. They infinitely transcend all his science and logic. In a word, they are divine, they proceed from the Infinite Mind, are matters of pure revelation, and are to be received in adoring reverence, on the simple ground of his indisputable authority. Man can measure the stars, and subdue the lightning; he can descend into the bowels of the earth, and bring together the petrified relics of past generations, and thence write the history of the earth's revolutions ; nay, he can analyze his own feelings, and construct a mental philosophy ; but he cannot enter the mind of God, he cannot fathom the depths of his infinite counsels. "Who by searching can find out God, who can find out the Almighty to perfection ?" Who then will venture to sit in judgment on "the things that are freely given us of God ;" or arraign the wisdom of a scheme for the redemption of man originating in the mind of Jehovah ?

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* We use the term *proved* here in its strict logical sense, as equivalent to *demonstrated.* No one needs to prove that the sun shines. He sees it, he feels it.

Those that convey this revelation to us demand investigation as divine messengers. They court it even, they glory in it. For this purpose they present divine credentials, that is, indisputable and well-known facts, which can be accounted for only on the supposition of their being supernatural or divine ; but they will not allow the message itself to be questioned by a human tribunal, to which, from the very nature of the case, it cannot submit. That message they convey to us as a testimony from Heaven, a philosophy from the Infinite, a religion from God. And who shall say that it is not refulgent with the light which irradiates the eternal throne ?

That Jesus Christ, his apostles and ministers existed, that they wrought stupendous miracles, that they fully authenticated their mission, who that knows history, who that has read the New Testament, can doubt ? Reason decides this point, and decides it on the same principles on which it proves any fact in science and history. But the communication which these divine messengers bring to the world, is another thing. While it is revealed through select instrumentalities, it proceeds from God, and has no taint of human imperfection. In the great truths of Christianity we have absolutely and truly the mind of God. This was the constant claim of Christ and his apostles ; and if their credentials cannot be sustained, the whole falls to the ground as a deception or an imposture. That man who disputes the miracles and the historical facts, calling them myths or legends, denies the gospel, rejects Christianity. He makes the Son of God an impostor, and his apostles fanatics, fools, or knaves. He would leave us without a revelation, and prove himself a more honest and a more able man than Jesus or Paul. But the credentials of the Christian witnesses can be sustained, the miracles of Christ and his apostles can be proved. The Son of God must have risen from the dead ; or all history lies, all testimony is false, all virtue is a cheat.

A spiritual Christianity, and a perfect system of morals, at once written and embodied, is an impossibility without a historical Christianity. It is the life without the man. As well, then, might you destroy the body for the purpose of saving the life, as abstract the soul of Christianity from the outward form in which its divine Author enshrined it.

Having ascertained, by means of reason, the reality of the historical facts of Christianity, we are thus compelled to receive the revelation which it conveys to us, as *the religion of God.*

Moreover, as light is made for the eyes, and thus adapts itself to our physical wants, long before philosophy has discovered its nature or analyzed its elements ; on which ground no reasoning can disprove its reality or adaptation to the purposes of vision ; so the truth as it is in Jesus, the light, or the love of Jehovah's heart, meets the wants of the soul, else dark and dead, and actually transforms it into its own radiant image, long before reason or philosophy can touch it, either for approval or disapproval. Some sceptical theorist may deny its divinity and power, on the ground of some preconceived notion or fancy of his own ; but what is that in view of the stupendous fact that the gospel has actually proved itself the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation ? Here is light, light divine, and all the reasoning in the world cannot disprove it. " God who caused the light to shine out of darkness hath shined into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus."

Reason cannot create facts, neither can it uncreate them. It must take them as they are, for better or for worse ; and well for it if it can discover their glorious harmonies and uses.

In a word, it is infinitely more reasonable to believe Christianity than to disbelieve it ; even if Christianity, in some of its aspects, transcends the compass and grasp of the finite intellect. It is a fact, clear as the sunshine, evident as the day ; though, like that sunshine, it come from the depths of heaven, or like that day, it rest in the bosom of an infinite night.

And if Christianity be a revelation of the Divine Wisdom, we may well ask, Shall " the mind of God" permit itself to be questioned by the mind of man ? Shall the decisions of infinite wisdom appear before a human tribunal ? Shall a divine philosophy, a method of pardon and eternal life from God himself, be submitted to the meagre philosophy and the petty logic of the men of this world? Shall the gospel of Christ the religion of the ever-blessed God, bow down and do homage to the gross materialism of one set of philosophers, or the transcendental mysticism of another? Above all, shall it be forced to cast off all its glories, and lie in the dust, a withered and degraded thing, to gratify the pride of some rhapsodizing spiritualist, who believes himself wiser than Christ and all his apostles? No! the foolishness of God is wiser than man, and the weakness of God is stronger than man. Christianity is either true or false, divine or human. If true, if divine, it is absolutely true, absolutely divine. It is a matter of infinite obligation, and must be received in all its length and breadth of authority and application. We do not want simply to think, to hope, to imagine; we want to know, to believe, to rejoice. In man, however, we can never confide. A philosophy either all human, or half human and half divine, we cannot trust. We need a religion from God, an absolute religion, a perfect and indestructible faith, a religion for life, a religion for death, a religion for immortality; so that "our faith may stand, not in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God." With this, we shall be safe; with this, happy and triumphant,

"Amid the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds!"

The world by wisdom never knew God, never can know God. All attempts to discover, that is, to work out and excogitate a perfect religion, must, from the nature of the case, prove utter failures. In fact, the thing involves an impossibility; for as water can never rise above its own level—since the part is never equal to the whole—since imperfection and sin can never comprehend the infinite and the holy—so man can never give us the knowledge of the true God and eternal life. Never can he solve the mighty problem, "How shall man be just with God;" how shall the unclean unite itself with the pure, the finite with the infinite, the fallen with God? The Father of spirits must himself interpose, and give us such clear and explicit information that no sincere and humble man may err upon points of such vast and thrilling interest.

If, then, philosophy cannot discover a perfect religion, it cannot certainly modify and improve the one already given us by God. Like the sun, this may have its obscurities, nay, it may be dark from excess of brightness. But this is no more than might have been expected. Indeed, this very circumstance is one of the most striking evidences of its divinity. A religion from God must have its aspect of mystery and difficulty. It belongs to the infinite, it runs into eternity. Its truths are the stars of a boundless expanse, and are set in a firmament of gloom. All nature is mysterious; but who would think of improving it? Can any one give sweeter hues to the rose of Sharon or the lily of the valley? Can he whiten the driven snow, or impart a deeper blue to the arch of heaven? Can he give a nobler curve to the neck of the war-horse, or add a more beautiful green to the grass of the fields? Can he dispose the stars above him in more perfect order, or add a deeper lustre to their silvery light? What, then, can speculative philosophy do for the Christian religion? What can reason add to the power of God, and the wisdom of God? Above all, shall philosophy dare to remove a single tint, a single leaf or flower, not to speak of a branch or limb, from the great Christian tree? Shall we permit it to tarnish the glory of God manifest in the flesh, the work of Christ's atoning sacrifice, or the beauty and perfection of the new-born soul? No! it has nothing to do with religion but to adore it, to fall prostrate at the feet of the Son of God, and "crown him Lord of all."

And yet, speculative philosophy has ever been tampering with Christianity, ever debasing its purity, ever weakening its power. By commingling her own imaginations with the plain declarations of the word of God, she has produced what Lord Bacon calls "*male sana admixtio*," infinitely worse than positive error itself; for the corruption of a good thing, as Horace suggests, ever becomes the worst of all. Nay more, philosophy has even asserted a sort of supremacy over Christianity, now modifying this, now changing that, now adding one feature, and then abstracting another, till religion, in her hands, has been transformed from an angel of light into a hideous phantom or an unsubstantial ghost. What! human philosophy superior to religion! Human reason above divine! Why, that is to cast down Jehovah from his supremacy, and exalt man to the throne.

But what is philosophy? The speculations of one man, and nothing more. In its last analysis it is reduced to this. For it has no existence separate from the mind of an individual, and no authority but what it derives from this source. It is the system of Spinoza or of Descartes, of Leibnitz or of Wolf, of Kant or of Hegel, of Locke or of Helvetius. It is the notions, perhaps, of Jouffroy, of Cousin, of Carlyle, or of some inferior spirits. A number of such persons may unite in defending their favorite theories or peculiarities. They may form a school, and give currency to a system ; but their combination, in this case, gives their opinions no additional authority. They are still the speculations or notions of distinct and independent individuals. To be received they must pass into other individual minds, into mine or thine, as it may happen, and thus possess no weight except as the probable reasoning or plausible speculations of a single fallible intellect. They may be true, but they are just as likely to be false, nay, they are more likely to be false than true. Hence they are ever fluctuating and passing away. One theory supersedes another, and all become feeble and effete with age. Time will devour the whole of them. And the reason of this is found in the simple fact that they consist of speculations on subjects and relations which lie beyond the bounds of the finite mind, and in nine cases out of ten, are but the splendid imaginings of gifted but erring men. In such a case, then, to assume a superiority over the religion of God, is to deify the individual reason, to dethrone God and worship self.

Reason, as Vinet clearly shows, has her province, and a noble one it is. It is hers to examine the credentials of the divine messengers, to question their character and purposes, to hear the voice of God, and in some cases to explain and enforce its meaning ; for she is conversant with man, in whose language God speaks to us, and with whose modes of thought, feeling, and expression, reason is entirely familiar. It is hers to admire and develop the beauty and harmony of the religion of God when received and authenticated ;—to trace the connections of its various parts, the analogy of its principles to the teachings of nature, and the consistency of its facts with the profoundest experience of the human heart. Reason has been called "*lucerna Dei*," and "the candle of the Lord within us ;" but certainly it is not fitted to illuminate the sun. It has also been denominated "the eye of the soul," and if it is so, most assuredly its proper function is simply to receive the light, not to mingle it with its own visions and obscurities. In that light it may see things new and strange, perhaps startling, nevertheless it must receive them without a murmur. It is not placed in the soul to create the light, or to change it in any way, but to receive it as it shines from the heaven of heavens.

But men talk of reason as if it were a God, as if they themselves were God; and thence plunge headlong into the infinite ocean of speculation and uncertainty. In their adventurous course, their heated imagination may see many strange sights, and their pen may describe them in language of surpassing eloquence; but they will soon find themselves in the very abyss of doubt, perhaps of despair. Indeed we learn, from the whole experience of the past, that the abandonment of an authoritative revelation, and an eager and consistent pursuit of what is called "the truth," meaning by this the absolute nature of things, ever conducts to infidelity or mysticism, to transcendental and impalpable spiritualism, or to absolute and atheistic doubt.

For the same reason, much of the religion which is popular and fashionable in certain quarters, or what is sometimes dignified with the title of rational Christianity, is not religion, but philosophy, not absolute faith, but human opinion. It consists, perhaps, of an admixture of philosophical speculation with Christianity, or it is Christianity eviscerated and withered by the refining process of rationalistic criticism. Hence it is ever changing in its character, and gradually but irresistibly tends to infidelity, to whose ranks it is constantly transferring its votaries. It is ever learning, ever advancing and improving, as its abettors would say, but never comes to the knowledge of the truth. In one case, it is transcendentalism and the gospel, in another, materialism and Christianity; in a third, a vague mixture of all sorts of notions; and in a fourth, a single feature or element of the gospel, surrounded with the grossest scepticism, like a single tree or fountain in a boundless desert.

How clear, then, it is, that we need to be believers, not speculators; men of God, not mere philosophers. The soul of man longs for certainty and rest, absolute security and untroubled repose. Where shall we find it? In the dreams of speculative philosophy? In transcendental mysticism? In cold and heartless rationalism? In the endless diversities, the beautiful but ever-shifting visions of rational or liberal Christianity? No! but in the cross of Christ; in the atonement and intercession of the great Mediator; in that good hope through grace, inspired, not put, begotten, not made, by the indwelling Spirit of the Son of God.

The importance of these principles is receiving the most striking illustrations in the present day. Not understanding them, and not finding sure anchorage in the haven of absolute and authoritative revelation, some are driven abroad upon the open sea of conjecture and doubt ; now impelled towards the rocks of infidelity, now imagining they have discovered the promised land, the Eldorado of philosophy and religion, in some new and visionary theory, or in some singular and unheard-of system of biblical interpretation ; then contending with the waves of scepticism ; and finally engulfed in the roaring surge of atheism and despair. One rejects the divinity and inspiration of Christ, justification by faith, and the regeneration of the soul by the Holy Spirit ;—and, in order to maintain his theory, casts away some portions of the word of God, and subjects others to a most tortuous and ungenerous criticism. Another spiritualizes the whole, and establishes his philosophy or his creed on the ruins of common sense and all established principles of scriptural criticism. While a third, wiser forsooth than all the rest ! rejects one half of the word of God as puerile, and makes myths and legends of the rest ; casts away the prophecies and the miracles ; denies the incarnation and resurrection of Christ ; insists that Jesus was only a man, a good and a noble-hearted man, but nothing more ; maintains that other Christs may yet arise, greater even than he was, that all Christianity is transient, except one or two great principles ; and hence pours contempt on the mediation and atonement of Christ, which the whole company of apostles, and the church of all ages, have regarded as the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation !

Others there are, who, after infinite wanderings, and the most strange and startling changes, " ever learning, but never coming to the knowledge of the truth," like Cain, vagabonds in the realm of spiritual things, seeking rest and finding none, finally abandon the pursuit as hopeless, and neglecting the great salvation, rush into the open arms of Rome, renounce their individuality, and find repose in the absolute and infallible dogmas of a corrupt and superstitious church. Such persons may imagine they have entered a magnificent palace, but it will be found that they are enclosed within the walls of a horrid prison. They have mistaken the despotism of man for the religion of God.

We have been constrained to make these remarks introductory to

[illegible]

the following work, because we deem them of moment at the present time, and in the hope that they may dispose some to read, with greater interest, its lucid and striking delineations of the religion of God.

As to the translation, we may be permitted to say that we have endeavored to steer a middle course between a rigidly literal, and a very free version. It has been our aim, as much as possible, to preserve the peculiarities of the author; but we have not felt ourselves bound, in every case, to give the exact turn or order of expression, particularly in those cases where a literal rendering would have been a bad, or a clumsy one. Still, in several instances, we have retained the French idiom, believing that its occasional use gives interest and vivacity to the translation. Vinet is by no means an easy author to translate. The original and philosophical cast of his thoughts, the delicacy of his conceptions, and the refined but beautiful turns of his expression, are not easy to transfer into clear and elegant English. Indeed, a perfect rendering of any book is scarcely attainable, but an approximation to it may be made by repeated efforts. After all, much of the beauty and power of a great and original work must be lost by the transference, like the delicate bloom of flowers, which is liable to vanish in the process of transplantation. But we have done what we could to present the thoughts and expression of our author to English readers; and " we cast it into the world," to use his own words, " commending it to the Divine blessing, which can cause some fruits of holiness and peace to spring from it for the benefit of the Christian Church."

Hartford, 1850.

MONTAIGNE;

WITH

THE ENDLESS STUDY, and OTHER MISCELLANIES.

MONTAIGNE;*

OR, THE NATURE AND PRINCIPLE OF MORALITY.

(FROM "ESSAIS DE PHILOSOPHIE MORALE.")

WE have endeavored to satisfy ourselves as to the causes of the popularity of certain authors, who are not only relished by the public as writers, but treated as intimate friends, and towards whom a sentiment more affectionate than admiration is incessantly attracting readers. Montaigne, La Fontaine, Madame De Sevigné, and Voltaire, are of this class. There is a charm, doubtless, in the frank ingenuousness of the first three, and in the elegant and lucid simplicity of the last —a charm that may help to explain why in all times, they have been the favorites of the public; but the greater portion of that favor is due to another cause. All four are, with reference to moral ideas, on a level with the majority of their readers; all four, devoted to the world, without having repudiated all ideas of duty and propriety, prescribing to each of us precisely what we should have prescribed to ourselves, or what nature inspires—enemies to excess in virtue as well as in vice —partisans of the golden mean, which is the soft ornament of the civilized world—expert in rendering us satisfied with ourselves, dispensing us from toils and struggles, they marvellously flatter our spiritual indolence, but without revolting our moral sentiment.* Is it surprising, then, that they please us? Is it not by just such means we are pleased in society? Are not the persons whose intercourse attracts us, fashioned precisely after this model? Besides, we have, in favor of our explanation, direct proof—the proof of fact. Who does not know, that it is this very want of firmness in moral doctrines, this exquisite tolerance which endures the evil as well as the good, this preference given to natural qualities over acquired virtues, which is most earnestly praised in La Fontaine, in Madame Sevigné, and especially in Montaigne?

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* For some account of Montaigne and his writings, see Sketch at the close of this essay, p. 56.

Read the panegyrists of this last writer; you will find them conceding praise to that in him which is really deserving of reprehension—the want of fixedness and rigor of morals.. They prove, by this means, that they themselves are wanting in the fixed and immutable prinples, the absence of which is characteristic of Montaigne. Otherwise, they would have condemned the looseness of his doctrines—nay, they would have gone further, as far as we claim to go to-day, and affirmed that in Montaigne's book there is, properly speaking, no morality.

They would have come to this conclusion, from the manner in which he treats the idea of God.

In his essays, Montaigne speaks frequently of God, but nowhere as the source whence our obedience to the moral law derives its sanction.

It is on this ground we maintain that he has no morality; as we shall endeavor to prove, by considering morality: first, with reference to its extent; secondly, with reference to its principle or its nature.

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* Exceptis Excipiendis.

What is the extent or sphere of morality? Once set aside the idea of God, what shall we say? Where find a measure that shall not be arbitrary? What is the maxim, however vast, that does not admit of the supposition, beyond its sphere, of indefinite developments? What principle includes all which obedience to God can include—all, indeed, which it necessarily embraces? To do to others nothing which we would not have them do to us; to do to others everything that we would have them do to us—these comprehend only the morality of the social relations. Moreover, how can we know, with reference to the second of these maxims, whence to deduce such a morality? We seem to see in it only a sublime absurdity, or a wandering ray from the morality of angels, or a lost fragment of religion. To live conformably to our nature, another vaunted maxim, is only a vicious circle. What is our nature? Who knows it?—who, at least, knows our origin? Who can remount to our origin, without remounting to God? Who can remount to God, without recognizing the fact, that to him must be referred, and from him derived, all morality worthy of the name? The standard of morality, then, is vague, arbitrary, and in every sense limited, so long as we cannot comprehend it with relation to the Author of the Universe, and, so to speak, from the summit of Divinity. This idea is the only one which envelops man entire, the only one which develops man entire, the only one which illuminates and controls his whole nature. God is, in the moral world, what his sun is in the physical world: "Nothing is hid from the heat thereof."

From what other source can we take the standard of morality? Can we take it from the idea of morality? It is true, we feel vaguely that morality is the law of perfection; true, that from the very impossibility of assigning it a limit, we conclude that it is unlimited; true, that we find it easier to deny it than to restrict it; and certainly no one can propose to be imperfect. But one of two things is true: either the idea of God, previously formed, causes us to measure the extent of the moral law, and proportions it to our sentiments and will; in which case, we have the proof we sought; or the moral law faithfully followed, from height to height, must cause us to gravitate towards God, who then becomes to us an immutable centre and point of observation. In both cases, the idea of perfection shows itself inseparable from that of God; and it may be affirmed, that he whose moral determinations do not take their departure from God, nor return to God, cannot have perfection for his measure of morality.

He can have for his measure only man in general, or some individual in particular, or himself.

But these diverse steps represent only illusive distances. Detached from the supreme platform, which is God, man must slide from one point of descent to another, till he comes to the lowest, which is his individuality. Man in general! But where is man in general? On what ground should that uncertain type be offered to us as the standard of human duty? And how shall a single individual dare to offer himself as such a standard? In vain does man, fallen from the summit, hold back, and clinging, try to suspend himself a few moments upon that steep declivity; the law of gravity drags him to the bottom, where he finds a sort of station or basis, the last of the whole, which we will call individuality, and which, under the different names of character, temperament, natural constitution, forms, in the last analysis, the morality of those who have not God. Thence morality is not the imprint of a common type, but the simple portrait of the individual, and so far from the law serving as a standard to the individual, it is the individual who serves as a standard to the law.

In all cases, indeed, to suppose it possible for the individual to find and submit to a law which is not himself, and which is not God, to give himself a morality greater than himself, and yet without being infinite, we should say, is not only to be beneath God, but beneath perfection, even if he should measure his morality by that of an angel; and being placed beneath perfection, is to be without the sphere of morality altogether.

Montaigne has exemplified all the consequences of the abandonment of this great idea. He has taken in himself, in his own individuality, the measure of the law by which he would be governed. So that his morality, in all the strictness of the term, is only the *morality of Montaigne*, the morality of his character, of his temperament, of his education; in a word, it is Montaigne himself, neither more nor less. Indeed, he neither imposes upon himself nor upon others in this respect. He takes no pains to conceal this fact; he claims, that "man is far gone to conform his obligation to the reason of any other being but his own." Thus we may expect to find in his morality both good and evil, both strength and weakness, both severity and laxity, following whatever his nature borrows from the one or other of these tendencies. Nor is this expectation disappointed, for such is Montaigne; his moral ideas, incoherent, inconsistent, and grotesque, have no other centre than his own individuality—a happy one, we grant, in the estimation of many.

Let us now change the point of view, and consider morality in its nature.

Considered in its nature, morality is obedience to the law of duty.

The idea of duty involves, necessarily, that of obligation towards an authority beyond us and above us.

Now what authority can we obey, if we obey not God ?—

Interest ? that is to say, ourselves.

Instinct ? that is to say, ourselves.

Habit ? that is to say, ourselves.

That is to say, that we do not obey at all.

We often hear persons speak of *duties* to themselves, an idea to which may correspond that of *obedience* to themselves ; but who would take literally and seriously this figure or play of words ? The expression is self-contradictory ; the moment one obeys himself he ceases to obey, and a duty which one believes to have reference purely and exclusively to himself, is no duty at all. It is unnecessary to insist upon this. But interest, instinct, habit, are the ME (our own personality) seen on three different sides ; or, if you please, these are forces to which we yield, but not authorities which we obey ; and so true is this that duty, in the majority of cases, consists precisely in resisting interest, instinct, and habit.

It would be contradictory to place an idea of duty in obedience to the tendencies, the repression of which constitutes duty itself.

Pardon me, says Montaigne, there is a conscience. We obey conscience.

It is in point to observe here that Montaigne, in many places, speaks of conscience as a reality, while in others he speaks of it as the fruit of custom.* This uncertainty ought not to surprise us; it is easy to fall into it (as is too often done) whenever conscience is confounded with the moral law. The moral law, body of notions, object composite, which on one side combines with our sentiments, on the other with external things, is for this very reason, capable of alteration, and has suffered much from the corruption of man. Conscience, a simple faculty, an elementary principle, has remained intact. It is nothing but the sentiment of obligation in its greatest purity, in its most abstract state.

Whatever it may be, since the idea of obligation is found at the basis of every definition of conscience, it follows, that, in every case, morality which is obedience to conscience, is obedience to the sentiment of obligation. Thus we find ourselves brought back to obligiation, a relative idea, an idea which supposes a duality, that is to say, a subject and an object.

In recognizing conscience, you recognize that you are under obligation; but to whom?

To God, or to yourself?

If to yourself, we have already seen that this is no obligation at all.

If, however, you continue to feel yourself bound by obligation, that obligation must find an object, and that object can be no other than God.

But you resist, you reclaim against this. "No," say you, "the object of our obedience is neither ourselves, nor God; it is the *good*. Why substitute God for the

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* Essais, 54, I. chap. 22.

good? Why introduce into morality a foreign element? Why transform it into religion?

First, on the supposition that God exists, we must necessarily admit, either that the *good* does not exist, or that it exists in him; for to conceive of God, is to conceive of a centre where every will gravitates; for if we refuse to God the character of being the source and principle of good, we not only strip him of his glory, but of his nature, nay, of his very being; for a God to whom everything does not tend, is nothing.*

We substitute God for good, in order to put a *reality* in the place of an *idea;* for good is only an attribute, a quality, a mode of being, which supposes a subject. If the good can dwell in us who are created beings, it is because it dwells primarily in an uncreated Being, from whom everything is derived; and thence, to remount to perfect good, we must remount to God.

We substitute God for good, because it is not in the order of things to be *responsible* to an *idea;* because the living substance of an idea, the being who possesses the idea as a quality having vanished, all sanction of that idea, all guaranty of its existence or force vanishes also; because the substance of that idea is not beyond our ME, (our individual personality,) it is our ME (personality) itself; and the source of good being adorable, in the true sense of the term, it clearly follows that there is no choice between adoring ourselves or adoring God.

There are many other reasons for substituting God for good; but we designedly exclude from a discussion purely metaphysical, proofs of a practical kind; we content ourselves with appealing to the nature of things, and resuming what we have already said, ask two questions. Is the voice of conscience *ourselves*, oɪ something *above ourselves?* Is that which binds and controls us in spite of our wishes, our tastes, our most pressing interests—is it the ME, or the NOT ME?* If it is the NOT ME, as it is impossible to doubt, is not that NOT ME, GOD? If conscience is the ambassador of God, is it possible to receive the ambassador and reject the sovereign? Is it not a mockery, to admit the conscience, and set aside God? For when the conscience has nothing to appeal to, when its letters of credit are torn to pieces, what is to prevent us from rejecting it with contempt? Upon this point we should be ashamed to say another word.

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* The word *tend*, which is very expressive here, is used as equivalent to *refer* or *relate*, only it indicates the intimate nature and strength of the relation. God is the centre of all things.—T.

Let us add, however, a fact of great interest; three fourths of mankind instinctively adhere to the position we maintain; for, says M. Cousin, "three fourths of mankind have no morality but that of religion,"—that is to say, three fourths of mankind have no other conception of morality, which is perfectly true. The other fourth do not thus judge of it; they have intellect enough to inpose silence on the voice of nature; but the instinct which demands a God is more imposing than the subtilty which rejects him!

If any one who cares nothing for God, persists in retaining, in his vocabulary, the words, conscience and moral obligation, you may well tell him that such involuntary persistence reveals to him a God, to whose existence he is compelled to render testimony; and that he cannot, therefore, too soon hasten to put God in the place, or rather at the head of these abstract ideas.

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* Our own personality, or something else?

Let us return to Montaigne. To make a morality conformable to, or identical with his temperament, it was necessary, first, to disencumber himself of God; an easy matter, silence alone sufficed; but what was more difficult was to rid himself of the idea of death; but this idea carefully pondered, includes or suggests all those infinite ideas, the foundation of which the author was so careful to sweep away. There would be no pressing reason to introduce God into life, if life were to last forever; but it has an end, an end mysterious, foreboding and full of fears. Here God is necessary; this idea returns whatever we do; death calls back upon the scene that august name, and with it returns morality, not that of temperament, but of perfection. Death then is Montaigne's enemy; he has done nothing to rid himself of that; he must try, therefore, to kill death, by tearing from him his sting, but in a way which is not that of St. Paul.

All he will have to do will be, to put it into the head of people that death is a final end, and that there is nothing after. And as that is not peculiarly agreeable at first blush, he will put in requisition all his powers, to prevent the horrible and appalling dread of annihilation from succeeding, in the soul, to the terrors of final judgment, which he has just succeeded in dissipating.

Do we calumniate him? In that case we can say, that he was willing to do so.

How can it be reasonably supposed that a religious man, a Christian, having to fortify his soul against the fear of death, should refer to none of those consoling ideas which religion opposes to the terrors of the last day?

How not accuse of materialism a man who, to re-assure you with reference to death, should tell you that it was a part of the universal order of things; that one may blunt its point, by trying it habitually against his heart; that death combines many things with which we are very familiar, such as sleep and fainting, being itself only a slumber more profound, a swoon more complete?

Buffon, employing the same kind of arguments, exclaims, "Why fear death?" but adds, from a regard to the Sorbonne, and his own tranquillity, "if we have only lived well," a restriction at once prudent and pleasing, of which we defy any one to find an equivalent in the author of the *Essays*. However, if he did not put it into his book, he took care to put into his life something which might take its place. Like Buffon, he also had his parenthesis, a little different, perhaps, namely: "*if one live well with the church*," or rather, "*if one die in the church*." And indeed, it was thus he died, to the great consolation of many people, who have no doubt, even in the presence of his writings, that he was a good Christian at heart. He had certainly promised himself such an end; he made his calculations to die a Christian. "At the very commencement," says he, "of the fevers and maladies which attack me, being yet in fair health, I reconcile myself to God by *Christian rites*, and find myself more free and easy. . . Let us live and enjoy ourselves among our friends; let us die and grow gloomy among strangers; by paying for it, one finds those who write his will, and those *who anoint his feet*."*

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* It is well known that Montaigne, after indulging a boundless scepticism, and jesting at all things serious and divine, on his deathbed called for the priests of the papal church, and partook of the sacrament, and *extreme unction*.—T.

These citations will surprise some persons, and they may ask, how can they be reconciled with the pains which Montaigne takes to withdraw from the Supreme Being the government of human life? That is a psychological phenomenon which deserves our serious regard.

About the sixteenth century, doctrine and morality, which in religion form a whole, for religion is only the fusion of these two elements, were found deplorably severed; the one went in one direction, the other in another. To *believe* and to *live,* had become two things, distinct and independent. Thus separated, doctrine was nothing more than a hieroglyph, without a key; morality a law, without a true sanction. Thereupon, men had to choose between two parts: either to re-establish the broken unity, or to consummate the separation. The reformers chose the first part; the free-thinkers, the second. The latter commenced by making a solemn reserve with reference to the ancient faith, of which they hoped to avail themselves in the hour of need, and to which, in other respects, custom bound them. Resembling those persons who, wishing to run across the fields, begin by carefully securing the house, but in order to be able to return, in case of storm or danger, carry off the key in their pocket, they began to philosophize and moralize on all the subjects of their investigations, as freely as if the religion they professed were nothing but a statue. Always good Catholics, they did not hesitate in their writings to become deists, materialists, and, in a few cases, atheists; the whole without regard to consequences; so that in the same individual there were two beings, side by side, who took the greatest care not to elbow each other—the man of custom and calculation, who was catholic, and the man of thought, who was everything else. Some of them might be seen, tossing their words by turns in opposite directions. Occasionally, the cassock of the ecclesiastic covered a philosopher, who demolished, in his secular habit, what he had established in his black robe, and that without scruple, without the slightest consciousness of inconsistency. Such was *Charron,* "who, having an eloquent tongue, was employed in preaching the word of God, and confirmed the wavering in the faith." This same Charron did not the less write the book called *Wisdom,* (*Sagesse,*) which brought him so much applause from the sceptics of the eighteenth century. In the preface to *Wisdom,* he informs us "that this work, which instructs us to live well, is entitled *Wisdom,* as the preceding one, which instructed us to believe, was called *Truth.*"* Speaking in another place, of piety and virtue, he wishes "that each may subsist and sustain itself without the aid of the other, acting solely from its own principle." Is not this sufficiently clear? Besides, this book, as a whole, is an indirect refutation of Christianity, and contains maxims hostile to religion, even in the broadest sense of the term. Some were scandalized by it; but others, good Catholics, were not at all; they saw no inconsistency between the robe of Charron and his book, between his first and his last work; and in their view, the censurers of *Wisdom* were "either malignant or superstitious persons, who had a spirit, low, feeble, and flat."

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* Charron had previously published a work called *Verité,* or *Truth.* The following account of Charron is from Dugald Stewart's Preliminary Dissertations on the History of Metaphysical and Ethical Science, p. 127: "Charron is well known as the chosen friend of Montaigne's latter years, and as the confidential depositary of his philosophical sentiments. Endowed with talents far inferior in force and originality to those of his master, he possessed, nevertheless, a much sounder and more regulated judgment; and as his reputation, notwithstanding the liberality of some of his peculiar tenets, was high among the most respectable divines of his own church, it is far from improbable, that Montaigne committed to him the guardianship of his posthumous fame, from motives similar to those which influenced Pope in selecting Warburton as his literary executor. The discharge of this trust, however, seems to have done less good to Montaigne than harm to Charron; for while the unlimited scepticism, and the indecent levities of the former were viewed by the zealous of those days with a smile of tenderness and indulgence, the slighter heresies of the latter were marked with a severity the more rigorous and unrelenting, that, in points of essential importance, they deviated so little from the standard of the Catholic faith." The statement in the last sentence is to be received with some modification; for

Strange condition of souls! but it is not peculiar to the age of Montaigne and Charron. The same schism between faith and morality exists in many who have taken the same part as those two philosophers. Christians in the church, pagans at home; believers by profession, infidels in reality; retaining the received creed, yet holding opinions which destroy it; and all this without the slightest consciousness or suspicion of the fact. What, I ask you, more common than this? But to return to Montaigne. A judicious critic, who professes, on most occasions, great respect for religion, has said, that Montaigne appears to rise above himself, when he exhorts us to fortify our souls against the fear of death. We too are of that opinion; Montaigne is nowhere richer, more varied, and eloquent. But how comes it to pass, that the ingenious critic, neither here

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Charron, in his day, certainly enjoyed the favor and confidence of the great majority of his Catholic brethren, and even of learned theologians. His philosophy was simply that of Montaigne methodized, and is equally inconsistent with the pure and disinterested morality of the Christian faith.—T.

nor there, has called our attention to the fact, that these passages, so beautiful in form, go to the extinction of all religious morality; and that it is the intense desire to attain that mournful end, which renders those pages of Montaigne so eloquent? How has the same writer nowhere remarked that the morality of Montaigne is without any philosophical as well as religious basis?* Here we cannot refrain from observing a curious fact. It is, that morality as a science does not exist among us, since the retreat of religious beliefs; that in the midst of the revival of philosophical duties, their highest branch, moral philosophy, is nearly withered, and that its place is marked as a blank in the picture of the intellectual activity of France.* This fact deserves attention.

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* The critic referred to is Villemain, who, in his "Discours et Melanges Litteraires," has said many fine things of the character and genius of Montaigne. He admits, after all, that the morality of his favorite is "Epicurean," and "proposes pleasure as its final aim," not indeed vicious, but virtuous pleasure, or what he terms such; so that virtue itself is only "a pleasant and gay quality,—qualité plaisante and gaie." "The morality of Montaigne," he says, "doubtless is not sufficiently perfect for *Christians.*" "It is not founded upon self-denial,—l'abnegation de soi meme." His morality is good so far as it goes, good as prudence perhaps, or, if you please, wisdom, not good for Christians, and, consequently, incapable of producing self-denial and disinterestedness, heroic or martyr virtue. If it corrects us, it does so without producing humility or penitence. It lops off a few broken twigs, but leaves the tree with its old nature. So that Villemain has well remarked, that Montaigne "corrects without humbling us,—nous corrige sans nous humilier." While Villemain admits Montaigne's Pyrrhonism, he maintains that he believed in "God and in virtue." That is admitted; but the question arises, *how* did he believe in God and in virtue? Does he refer all actions to God? No. Does he derive his morality from God? No. Is his virtue more than that of Epicurus? No. All this Villemain virtually admits. As to Montaigne's views of death, the very best thing that Villemain can quote from him on this subject is the following: "*Sortez de ce monde comme vous y êtes entré; le meme passage, que vous avez fait de la mort à la vie, sans passions et sans frayeur, refaites-le de la vie à la mort. Votre mort est une des pièces de l'ordre de l'univers, une pièce de la vie du monde.*"—T.

The principal object of this essay has been to show that morality, taken in its true nature and in its whole extent, is compelled to find in God the first ring upon which to suspend its chain. If it be objected to us, and we earnestly desire that it may, that the idea of God is not God, and if the theory of morality has need of the idea of God, it is God himself that the moral life has need of, we admit its force, nay, contend for the fact upon which it is based, as a fundamental principle.

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* We ought, nevertheless, to refer with gratitude to the admirable work of M. de Gerando on Moral Improvement.

SKETCH OF MONTAIGNE.

BY THE TRANSLATOR.

We add a few notices of Montaigne, for the sake of those not familiar with his life and writings. They may serve, perhaps, to elucidate and enforce the principles of the preceding essay. We must confess, however, to some predilection for Montaigne, notwithstanding his admitted and glaring faults. His shrewd sense, happy temperament, bizarre humor, racy style, and even boundless egotism, have a charm. His conduct as a man of the world was fair, almost unexceptionable, that is, as things generally go in this strange world of ours. He had certainly frankness and genius, immense powers of description, epigram, and gossip, all of which he mingles indiscriminately in his writings. His essays have rare freshness and vigor. They abound in strange and striking thoughts, original conceptions, and lively figures. Brusque and homely, dashed with a boldness and even licentiousness, not unfrequently repulsive, and even loathsome, he has vivid flashes of beauty and power, a penetrating insight into men and things, and a suprising mastery of earnest and homely speech. Indeed Montaigne is the Hogarth of writers. Alternately he repels and attracts his readers. Never dull, never commonplace, he is always amusing, and often instructive.

We agree fully with Villemain, who, in his eloquent *Eloge* of Montaigne, endeavors to palliate his faults and celebrate his virtues, that the old Gascon humorist was "a profound thinker, during the reign of pedantry, an ingenious and brilliant author in a language unformed and barbarous;"* nay more, we will allow that Montaigne was honest, brave, and even generous in his way. Had he been a mere heathen philosopher, he might have been respected for his good sense and integrity, and his scepticism, though mournful enough, might have been forgiven in consideration of his circumstances. Neither would we make him an offender for a word, nor forget that in an age of bigotry and outrage he was free from intolerance and fanaticism.

But to all this there are serious drawbacks, and truth demands from us, and from every one, an honest expression upon this subject. So that with reference to Montaigne we must say what Cicero said of far greater and better men, Socrates amicus, Plato amicus, sed magis amica veritas. Truth, then, compels us to say, that Montaigne had no fundamental principles, his

* Mélanges Littéraires.

virtue was selfishness, at the best prudence—his religion a joke—his philosophy fatalism—his life one long and weary dream—and his works the exact mirror and apology of his life. A greater egotist never lived—a man of genius, with an appearance of solid principle and substantial comfort, yet frivolous and vain, absurd and aimless, from beginning to end. A shrewd observer, an admirable anatomist of his own mind, a natural and vigorous writer, he lived and died—must we say it?—"without God and without hope in the world." But he was good-natured in his way, honest withal, hospitable to his friends and visitors, a good landlord, an easy neighbor, a fair husband, loved his wine, paid his debts, and died in the Catholic faith. So far so good; for such things are not to be despised in men that might have been worse. But all the good in Montaigne was due to his constitution and habits of early training, his spirit of forethought and contrivance, which he had in common with beavers and bees, and especially to his extreme and Epicurean anxiety to be free from regret and care. Not a particle of it is due to faith or to love, to the spirit of religion or the spirit of virtue. God was often on his lips, as in his writings, but not in his thoughts, above all, not in his affections. Of faith, of prayer, of charity, of "holy living" and "holy dying," he knew nothing. He doubted of all things, of man, of God, of heaven, of hell, of the soul, and of immortality, of religion, of philosophy, of vice, and of virtue. All he claimed to know certainly was, that there was such a man as Montaigne, and that Montaigne should take good care of himself; that is, live as easy and die as easy as he could. Nature is his God, if God he can be said to have. But Nature and Montaigne are one! He lived, therefore, according to Nature, that is, according to Montaigne. He happened to be of an easy, firm, half-Epicurean, half-Stoic turn of mind, shrewd in his calculations and careful in his business; he took good care of his health and of his money, and so he succeeded in passing through life without any great vices or great virtues, with tolerable comfort to himself and some satisfaction to his neighbors. Had he been a positively bad man, like many of his admirers and followers, his notions, such as they were, would have aggravated his temperament, and furnished a plausible apology for his vice. By means of such principles any "honest rogue" might make out a very good case in his own behalf.

Born in the early part of the sixteenth century, (1533,) at the chateau of the same name in Perigord, Montaigne was educated with great freedom and care, being awakened in the morning by the sound of musical instruments, taught to speak and to read the Latin tongue, even when a child, and encouraged to spend much time in bodily exercises and out-door sports. Left very much to the freedom of his own will, he was subjected to little control, and incited to noble and virtuous action only by the counsel and encouragement of his parents. His father was of English descent, though a citizen of France, who had distinguished himself as a soldier, and was chosen mayor of Bordeaux. Proud of himself, of his castle, and of his reputation, and equally proud of his little son, whom he regarded as a sort of prodigy, he inspired the latter with a fair proportion of the family pride and the family virtue. At the age of thirteen, he had finished his studies —so say his biographers—at the college of Bordeaux, where, among others, he enjoyed the instructions of the celebrated Protestant, George Buchanan, at that time an exile from his native land. He was destined for a judicial station, and was some time a parliamentary counsellor; but aversion to the duties of his office caused him to retire from it. Subsequent to the death of his father, he was elected mayor of the city of Bordeaux, the duties of which he discharged to the satisfaction of the citizens. Attached by early ties to the Catholic faith, which he probably despised in his heart, but held as a reserve against danger; averse also to everything like care and self-denial, possessing an ample estate, disposed to give full scope to all his tastes, and indulging in a boundless freedom of inquiry, he abandoned public life for more homely and congenial pursuits. He travelled much in foreign lands, and received great attentions in Rome and Paris. But he best loved his home, and as he grew old, devoted himself chiefly to the study and description of himself. He lays the whole open, at least claims to do so, though probably little suspecting the depths of vanity and folly which lay beyond his gaze in the secret depths of the soul. He parades his faults, makes a merit of his selfishness, vanity, and indolence. "I study myself," he says, "more than any other subject. This is my metaphysic, this my natural philosophy;"—he might have added, "this my virtue, this my religion." He quotes abundantly from the old pagan philosophers, and occasionally from other authors, sacred or profane, now yielding to this, and now to that by turns, at one time apparently accepting, at another rejecting the whole, and of course, falling into all sorts of strange notions and extravagances. "The writings of the best authors among the ancients," he tells us, "being full and solid, tempt and carry me which way almost they will. He that I am reading seems always to have the most force; and I find that every one in turn has reason, though they contradict one another." He details all sorts of trifles and gossiping stories, indulges in the grossest license of description, falls foul of all opinions, sacred and profane, hunts up all singular, outlandish, and even indecent sayings, all monstrous fancies and follies, and while aiming to promote *virtue*, sweeps away the foundations of reason and religion. He is no Atheist, in his own view, far from it; he is not even an Infidel and a heretic: he seems even religious at times, and strives with all his might, so he seems to think, to promote the integrity and happiness of his fellow-men. In defending the work of the Spanish Raymond de Sebonde, half philosopher and half monk, who professed to vindicate the Christian religion, by demolishing all reason and common sense, Montaigne becomes almost devout, and one would think, for a few pages, that he was one of the best Christians imaginable; but reading on, he finds him extinguishing the last hope of the world, by complimenting it out of the realms of reason, and proving men to be no better or higher, either in body, soul, or state, than parrots or monkeys. On one page he seems to glorify virtue, on another vice; not, indeed, vice in the abstract, or vice as he understood it, that is, vice in its absolute and grosser forms, but what common sense and the word of God plainly denounce as vice. Now he exalts faith to heaven, and anon tramples it under the foot of doubt. On this page reason is everything, on the next nothing. Here sobriety, chastity, and self-denial are extolled as virtues; there drunkenness, sensuality, and self-indulgence receive an ample and enthusiastic apology! Indeed, if the arch-demon himself had written a book, not a bold, vicious book, which every one would throw away with contempt, but a fair, honest, brave sort of a book, which gentlemen and even ladies would read with a relish, he could not have taken a more effectual means than Montaigne has *unwittingly* done, to break down the barriers of religion and virtue. The extreme popularity of Montaigne's Essays among all circles in France, may account in part for the spirit of levity, licentiousness, and doubt which seems inseparable from that people. Seventy-five editions of the book have been published in Europe, but the greater part in France, and have been circulated especially "among courtiers, soldiers, princes, and men of wit and generosity."

The spirit of his great motto, *Que scais-je? What know I?* which he wrote under his name, while over it he drew a pair of emblematic scales, runs through his book, and pervades his whole life. That he was an original and vigorous thinker, and has said some admirable things which deserve the attention of thinkers, no one can doubt; but he is never profound, never consistent, and though true, strikingly true in parts, he is false, absolutely false as a whole. "The radical fault of his understanding," says Dugald Stewart, "consisted in an incapacity of forming, on disputable points, those decided and fixed opinions, which can alone impart either force or consistency to intellectual character." In a word he was a sceptic, not, however, a sceptic who merely considers and examines before he believes or teaches, not such a sceptic as the lofty and ethereal Pascal, who, while he doubts of man, believes in God, and finds there the highest union of reason and faith, but a simple and incorrigible doubter, a doubter from the beginning to the end of life, with some prudential maxims, but no fixed and immutable principles, no clear and well-grounded hopes. He is not positively an infidel, at least not consciously so, but a sceptic such as we find described in a work of the age to which Montaigne belonged, and drawn doubtless from life, by Bishop Earle, entitled "Microcosmography, or a Piece of the World Discovered in Essays and Characters." Indeed, if the picture had been presented to Montaigne, as has been shrewdly conjectured, he must himself have acknowledged the likeness. "A Skeptick in religion is one that hangs in the balance with all sorts of opinions; whereof not none but stirs him, and none sways him. A man guiltier of credulity than he is taken to be; for it is out of his belief of everything that he believes nothing. Each religion scares him from its contrary, none persuades him to itself. He would be wholly a Christian, but that he is something of an Atheist; and wholly an Atheist, but that he is partly a Christian; and a perfect Heretick, but that there are so many to distract him. He finds *reason* in all opinions, *truth* in none; indeed the least reason perplexes him, and the best will not satisfy him. He finds doubts and scruples better than resolves them, and is *always too hard for himself.*"*

Some call this "a position of equilibrium," highly philosophical and becoming; and under the plausible conceit, justify all the errors and aberrations of Montaigne. But, alas! what sight can be more painful and humiliating, than that of an old man like Montaigne, thus doubting, on the verge of eternity, poising, as best he can, his palsied limbs on the edge of the toppling precipice, ready to take the last leap in the dark, or "to shoot the gulf," as Emerson calls it, with little hope of finding anything beyond, but the deeper abyss of eternal extinction? Surely there is something inexpressibly mournful, as well as "farcical" in such a life, as Montaigne's American eulogist seems to suspect, and no man can justify it by saying, as he does, "Let it lie at fate's and nature's door."

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* Quoted in Stewart's Preliminary Dissertations on the History of Speculative Philosophy, p. 124.

Montaigne tells us that he married a wife, belonging to the church, and did many other things equally important, not because he chose to do them, but because it was "the custom." At the hour of death, he acted upon his old principle of habit and of doubt. He died, of a painful disease, in 1592, in the sixtieth year of his life. He caused the mass to be celebrated in his chamber. At the elevation of the host, he raised himself upon his bed to adore it, "*pour l'adorer*," but immediately fell back, and expired.

We have said, and Vinet has said, that Montaigne had no God; that, in fact, he was a materialist, perhaps a pantheist and fatalist, though, doubtless, of all the notions involved in these systems he had his *doubts*. But if he had any theory of the Universe at all, it approached the most nearly to fatalism. Hence he says, *Essays, chap.* 12*th:* "All this I have said," namely, that men are in no respects superior, in body or in soul, to the lower animals, "to prove this resemblance there is in human things, and to bring us back and join us to the crowd. We are neither above nor below the rest. All that is under heaven (says the wise man) is subject to one law and one fortune.

> All things remain
> Bound and entangled in one fatal chain.—*Lucretius.*

There is some difference; there are several ranks and degrees, but it is under the aspect of one and the same nature;

> All things arising from their proper cause
> Remain distinct and follow nature's laws.—*Lucretius.*"

And so he goes on to show that all things are fated; that men and animals alike are bound by a resistless necessity; and that, in this respect, man has no pre-eminence over the beast; concludes, that it is best it should be so, and exhorts himself and others to acquiescence and submission.

Of course, such a man could have no morality, properly speaking, and little or no hope beyond death. It is singular, however, to see how death haunts him, and how much he talks about it. Indeed, his essays are full of it. He recurs to the subject again and again; and though he pretends to be reconciled to the thing itself, nay, to be on familiar terms with it, having been nearly killed on one occasion—an incident which he describes with great minuteness, (as if he would penetrate the fearful mystery,) and compares it again and again to sleeping and fainting—it is quite evident that it is the one great evil which he cannot avoid. Stoic and Epicurean by turns, he now braces himself up against it, as something inevitable, mustering all his resources for the dread encounter; and then again, affecting to despise it, speaking of it as something absolutely pleasant, or at least bearable, and using all the means in his power to make the encounter, if not agreeable, yet not absolutely overwhelming. But of Christian hope or consolation he makes no mention. He offers no prayer, no plea, before the mercy-seat; says nothing of that Divine Saviour, who has conquered death, and bereft it of its sting, and not a word of that glorious home, where all the holy are reunited in eternal bonds. In a word, he speaks of the subject as any old Pagan might be supposed to speak of it, who has never heard of the way of life, and who seriously doubts the immortality of the soul.

After stating that he was always prepared for death, that is, that in his travels, he always carried about with him certain *material* conveniences which might assist him in his last hours, he adds: "To conclude the account of my frail humors, I do confess, that in my travels, I seldom come to my quarters, but it runs in my mind whether I could like to be sick, and die there. I wish to be lodged in some private part of the house, remote from all noise and nastiness, not smoky nor close. I aim to soothe death by these frivolous circumstances, or rather to rid myself of all other incumbrances, that I may have nothing to do but to wait for an event which will be enough to weigh me down without any other load." He then proceeds to specify various forms of death, and the one he would prefer; and says, "It is but a *moment*, 'tis true, but withal a *moment* of *such weight*, that I would willingly give many days of my life *to shoot the gulf in my own way.* * * * Might not one even render it pleasant, as they did who were companions in death with Anthony and Cleopatra? I set aside the severe and exemplary efforts produced by philosophy and religion. But amongst men of low rank, such as a Petronius and a Tigillinus, at Rome, there have been found men condemned to dispatch themselves, who have, as it were, lulled death to sleep, with the delicacy of their preparations; they have made it slip and steal away, even in the height of their accustomed diversions, amongst harlots and good fellows. There is not a word of consolation, no mention of making a will, no ambitious affectation of constancy, no talk of their future state, amongst sports, feasts, wit, and mirth, table-talk, music, and amorous verses. Is it not possible *for us to imitate this resolution, in a more decent way?* Since there are deaths fit for fools, and fit for wise, let us find out such as are *fit for those who are betwixt both.*" Book III., ch. 9.

In these remarks, we have been insensibly drawn further than we intended; and yet we are tempted to say a few words more; for Montaigne, in his essential characteristics, has recently been reproduced in America. Two hundred and sixty years after his death, he reappears once more in Ralph Waldo Emerson, who, in his general disposition and turn of mind, may be justly termed the American Montaigne. His works, with slight exceptions pertaining to form and degree, are an echo of those of his French prototype, with perhaps a louder and sweeter tone, mingled with a peculiar, but vigorous New England twang. There are differences —perhaps considerable ones; for Emerson is a more thorough and consistent sceptic, who knows himself in this respect completely, and makes no pretensions to faith in any creed or church, whether Catholic or Protestant. He has also more depth and refinement, and, unlike Montaigne, who is materialistic in his tendencies, Emerson is ideal and imaginative, a worshipper of beauty, and what is singular, at first sight, a devout adorer, not only of nature, but of himself. Montaigne never rose to such a strain. He had a comfortable opinion himself, but, upon the whole, never fell down to wor his own image. Yet both constitute their own G, and depend for guidance and blessing exclusively upon their personal impulses. Neither have faith, except in themselves; and both give utterance to the heartiest contempt of all other faiths. Emerson, it may be said, has faith in the infinite, in the over-soul, as he calls it, but it is the infinite as it flows and flashes in his own native energies and tendencies. The style of Emerson, though unlike that of Montaigne in several particulars, wonderfully resembles it in others. Indeed, it seems the utterance of the same man, somewhat polished, and in a higher and more rhythmic strain. It has the same honest, homely freedom, the same rapidity and force, the same sudden and striking turns, the same quaint and racy vigor, the same peculiar and lively ring. The quotations are somewhat similar, and made after the same fashion—nay, many of the thoughts and expressions are precisely alike. Indeed, you see Montaigne and Emerson on almost every page—the one in the homely garb of the old Gascon gentleman, the other in the pomp and splendor of modern rhetoric.

But upon this subject we need not argue or speculate. Emerson has himself confessed, in general terms, the family likeness and sympathy. The essays of Montaigne from early years have been his favorite study; they seem to himself the utterance of his own secret heart. In his article on Montaigne, in his "Representative Men," he says: "And yet since the personal regard which I entertain for Montaigne may be unduly great, I will, under the shield of this prince of egotists, offer, as an apology for electing him as the representative of scepticism, a word or two to explain how my love began and grew for this admirable gossip. A single odd volume of Cotton's translation of the Essays remained to me from my father's library, when a boy. It lay long neglected until after many years, when I was newly escaped from college, I read the book and procured the remaining volumes. I remember the delight and wonder in which I lived with it. It seemed to me *as if I had myself written the book in some former life, so sincerely it spoke to my thoughts and experience.*"* No wonder, for Emerson is a genius, and does not pray. "The dull pray," he says, "the geniuses are light mockers." Montaigne doubts, doubts everything in its turn. So, also, Emerson doubts. "Knowledge," he affirms, "is the knowing that we cannot know." "Beliefs," he adds, "appear to be structural; and as soon as each man attains the poise and vivacity which allow the whole machinery to play, he will not need extreme examples, but will alternate all beliefs in his own life." He believes, indeed, in "the natural and moral economy," in "absolute truth and virtue." Good, very good! so far as it goes; nothing could be better. In fact, it is fundamental; but what is it? Is devotion one with "the falling leaf and the blowing clover?" "All things," says Emerson, are "identical," the "one and the many"—but the one is in the many, and all men and animals are on their way to glory! Sin is "defect," sin is only something "less;" and virtue is acting "according to one's constitution." God is in all, as instinct, as intellect, as intuition; God is the all, and therefore all things, good and bad, are fated. Beliefs are "structural" a wise man runs through them all, and lands in what? In the absolute, the inevitable, the eternal. Believe what he will, nay, believe nothing, "all are at last contained in the Eternal Cause." "God is a substance, and his method illusion!" And thus,

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* Representative men, p. 163.

> "If our bark sink, 'tis only to a deeper sea."

"Belief," says Emerson, "consists in accepting the affirmations of the soul; unbelief in denying them." Pretty comprehensive this; but whose soul? My soul, your soul, any soul—what we affirm is the truth, nothing more, nothing less. Belief then, like virtue, is "constitutional." I cannot accept your faith, you cannot accept mine. We must take what nature gives us. Each man must have a revelation of his own; nay, he is his own revelation. There can be no *Bible*, then, from God, no special revelation, no infallible creed. Christianity may be great and good, but there is something greater and better. In a word, we are (Emerson and those who hold with him might say) our own religion and our own God. The Infinite speaks in us, lives in us, acts in us, whatever we are, and whatever we do! And this infinite is little better than the Chinese sage's "vast flowing vigor." Says Emerson, emphatically, "Fortune, Minerva, Muse, Holy Ghost,—these are quaint names, too narrow to cover this unbounded substance. The baffled intellect must still kneel before this cause which refuses to be named—ineffable cause, which every fine genius has essayed to represent by some emphatic symbol, as Thales by water, Anaximenes by air, Anaxagoras by (nous) thought, Zoroaster by fire, Jesus and the moderns by love; and the metaphor

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[*] Representative Men, p. 216.

of each becomes a national religion. The Chinese Mencius has not been the least successful in his generalization. 'I fully understand language,' he said, 'and nourish well my vast flowing vigor.' 'I beg to ask what you call vast flowing vigor?' said his companion. 'The explanation,' replied Mencius, 'is difficult. This vigor is supremely great, and in the highest degree unbending. Nourish it correctly, and do it no injury, and it will fill up the vacancy between heaven and earth. This vigor accords with and assists justice and reason, and leaves no hunger.' In our more correct writing we give to this generalization the name of Being, and therefore confess that we have arrived as far as we can go. Suffice it for the joy of the universe, that we have not arrived at a wall, but at interminable oceans."* Interminable oceans, vast flowing vigor, fire, air, water, thought, love, being, a boundless, ineffable, nameless, ever-flowing abyss, and we the waves—something grand in all this—but where is God, the personal God, the Father of spirits, the God who hears prayer, who forgives sin, who regenerates the soul?

Said we not well, that Emerson, like Montaigne, has no God, in the proper sense of the term? To him God is "the generalization" of the intellect, the ever-presen "Ideal"—substance, being, unity, "that unity, that over-soul, within which every man's particular being is contained and made *one* with all other." "We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime, *within man is the soul of the whole;* the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the eternal One.† Perfect and eternal identity here. If God is personal, he is personal only in man. He comes to consciousness only in man, as Hegel, Emerson's master in metaphysics, teaches. Hence our author adds: "And this deep power in which we exist, and whose beatitude is all accessible to us, is not only self-sufficing and perfect in every hour, but *the act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object, are one.*"[*] Of course "before the revelations of the soul, Time, Space, Nature, sink away." God is only a "common nature," "all mind is one," "that third party, that common nature, is not social; it is *impersonal; is God.*"[†] And thus, "the simplest person who in his integrity worships God, *becomes God!*".[‡]

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* Emerson's Essays, 2 Series, pp. 79, 80.

† Essays, 1 Series, p. 245.

Of course Emerson, in such a case, like Montaigne under the influence of materialism or fatalism, can have no morality or virtue. It can be nothing more than his peculiar temperament, having no basis, no sanction or law. "That which I call right or goodness is the choice of my constitution; and that which I call heaven, and inwardly aspire after, is the state or circumstance desirable to my constitution."[§]

Sin is unknown to such a system. It is simply "defect," or something "less," as Emerson frequently confesses, and will soon be swallowed up in the boundless tides of being. There can be no reward, and no punishment, no salvation, at least no perdition. All, good and bad, whether they worship in churches, or sin in brothels, are on their way to glory. On this point, startling as it may seem, Emerson does not blench for an instant. "Evil," says he, "according to the old philosophers, is good in the making. * * * * To what a painful perversion had Gothic theology arrived that Swedenborg admitted no conversion for evil spirits! But the divine effort is never relaxed; the carrion in the sun will convert itself to grass and flowers; *and man, though in brothels or jails, or on gibbets, is on his way to all that is good and true.*"* In a word, good and evil, in their essential natures, are indifferent. The bad changes into the good. God hates the one no more than the other. Like the Indian god whose words Emerson quotes with approbation, he may say: "I am the same to all mankind. There is not one who is worthy of my love or hatred. They who serve me with adoration,—I am in them, and they in me. If one whose ways are altogether evil serve me alone, he is as respectable as the just man; he is altogether well employed; he soon becometh of a virtuous spirit, and obtaineth eternal happiness."†

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[*] Essays, 1 Series p. 245.

[†] Ibid. pp. 249, 252.

[‡] Ibid. p. 265.

[§] Ibid. p. 125.

Finally, in such a system, there can be no devotion, no piety, no prayer. "Men's prayers," says Emerson, "are a disease of the will." "Prayer for a private end, is meanness and theft." "As soon as a man is one with God, he will not beg,"—pray.‡

Nor will he repent. "Another kind of false prayers are our regrets." And why should a man repent, who s one with God, who is God? He may change for the better; but he has nothing to regret, nothing to fear. Demons and wicked men need only "self-reliance," to become as the angels of light. They, too, have nothing o regret, nothing to fear. For "the same fire, vital, onsecrating, celestial, burns until it shall dissolve all things into the waves and surges of an ocean of light."*

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* Representative Men, p. 138.

† Ibid. p. 139.

‡ Essays, 1 Series, pp. 68 69.

Emerson has a fine essay on *Prudence*, and doubtless, like his friend Montaigne, he is in most things a prudent man. He seems to possess a free, joyous spirit—judging simply from his works; but alas! these are probably but a poor expression of the man. He seems to have no fear of death, and exults in the prospect of falling back into the boundless ocean of being! He claps his hands, and shouts with infantine glee, in the presence of the vast, ever-flowing over-soul. To him the past is nothing, the future nothing, the present "always present," and always joyful, everything! He seems content to live, content to die. But all this may be surface, at the best, poetry, or philosophic cant, and beneath these joyous waves of the upper spirit, there may be, even in Emerson's soul terrible chasms of doubt and fear, opening into unutterable and appalling depths below. Be this however as it may, nay, granting that he has good health, and a happy constitution, the gift of genius, and the gift of joy, his system of religion and morals is utterly baseless and barren; and such a man is just as likely to act "from the devil," as from God; from vice as from virtue. "I remember," says he, "an answer which, when quite young, I was prompted to make to a valued adviser, who was wont to importune me with the dear old doctrines of the church. On my saying, 'What have I to do with the sacredness of traditions, if I live wholly from within?' my friend suggested,—'But these impulses may be from below, not from above!' I replied, 'They do not seem to me to be such; *but if I am the devil's child, I*

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* Essays, 1 Series, p. 259.

will then live from the devil.' No law can be sacred to me, but that of my own nature. Good and bad are but names very readily transferable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution, the only wrong what is against it."*

Ah me, how true it is, as recorded by the pen of inspiration, "that there is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." For here is a theory, vaunted as the very perfection of beauty and power, without a God, without a Saviour, without a morality, without a heaven,—a theory, which makes man his own God, his own law, his own morality, his own heaven,—a theory, the final result of which must be universal atheism, or at the best universal doubt. It is, however, the natural, the inevitable result of abandoning an authoritative revelation, and above all of rejecting that great central truth, the incarnation of Jehovah in the person of Jesus Christ, where alone we find the personal God, the Father, the friend, the Saviour of man.

* Essays, 1 Series, p. 44.

MAN CREATED FOR GOD.

(FROM "LA MANIFESTATION DES CONVICTIONS RELIGIEUSES.")

MAN cannot be his own end, nor that of any other creature in the universe. All things have been created for one another, according to the law of a progression, of which man is the last term. If he would seek a higher relation, he must seek it in God. To seek it in himself would be to make himself his own God; to seek it in anything beneath God is impossible. No intermediate beings can stand in such a relation to him, for their nature is analogous to his own, and their most excellent faculties exist in vain if they have not God for their object. We do not mean, by this assertion, to deny all immediate relation of the universe to God. Nevertheless, the direct relation of the Father of spirits is with spirits; matter exists only as the form, the object or instrument of mind; mind is first, and matter can be conceived of only in reference to mind; mind, then, in the light of the material universe, has an absolute existence: everything exists for it, and it exists for God; and man, the only spiritual being, the only *personal* agent on the earth, in the midst of the immense diversity of *things* animate and inanimate, man is the spirit, as it were, of this vast body; he completes in himself all its beings and relations, all converge to him and through him towards their great first Cause.

Either we are our own end, and this is the hypothesis of Atheism; or our existence is without an end, which is contrary to reason; or finally, God is our end. We exist for him; but what does this imply? Must this remain in the region of abstract ideas, and never become an embodied fact? Ought it not to be realized; but how should such an idea be realized, in view of the enormous disproportion and distance there is between us and God? In this aspect of the matter, the whole universe, comprising the aggregate of immaterial beings, would be an absurdity, since, between the most excellent of them and their Creator, the disproportion is infinite. But neither this nor any other circumstance can efface the law written on our nature by the divine hand. Every being gravitates to its principle, every created spirit gravitates towards the uncreated Spirit. Every principle tends to realize itself in facts; and consequently the created spirit must regulate its life by the uncreated Spirit. If we say these natural tendencies fall short of their object, we must believe that they are not natural; and to be satisfied that this effort at submission and dependence is only a leap in the dark, a mere phantom, a solemn mockery, or at the best a mere gratification of our internal logic, we must understand better than we do now the relations of the Creator with the creation; we must be able to prove that there is no fundamental force in these demonstrations of the spiritual creature; that their presence or their absence reckons for nothing in the system of the universe, and that, being simple modifications of our internal existence, conduce nothing to the existence or maintenance of order. Reasoning thus, all the facts and phenomena of moral order must be regarded as mere appearances, and the entire combination of facts as a phantasmagoria; so that what is real for our senses would alone be real to God.

Such an inference, in our opinion, would be anything but bold; it would be timid and base. *Sapere aude.* Dare to infer from the spiritual nature of man his destiny and his duty; and when told of the glory of God as the end of your existence, recoil not at the expression, knowing well that any other by which you might replace it, would be no more intelligible or less figurative; and that, in fact, were there nothing real but that which could be named, we must deny to ourselves the highest, the most essential realities. Nothing can be more just or more rational in the view of man than this expression, the glory of God. Yes: if God be God, if man be man, the glory of God is the great end of man. Man is created to render glory to God; his speech, his life, his thought unite to glorify God; all that he does in another spirit is labor lost, movement without progress, and an utter waste of life.

Trembling I approach this vast abyss. To speak of what God is, of the mode of his existence, as if such existence could have a mode, is little less than profanation. Let me put my hand upon my month, and prostrate myself in the dust, O my God, when I speak of thee! Have respect to my desire; for I wish to glorify thee. Permit me to name thee, and keep me from naming thee in vain. Deign to watch over my words, and let none escape my lips but such as honor thee.

"Thou art sufficient to thyself, O thou who comprehendest all within thyself! Thy glory comes not from without; for there is nothing without thee: thy glory is not, like ours, derived from the opinion of others; for to constitute our glory, such opinion must be of value in our eyes, and its influence acknowledged by us; but what opinion can have value or influence in thy sight, Thou, who art the source of truth, and from whom proceeds all that is true in us! The contemplation of thyself suffices thee; thy glory springs from thine own nature. Immutable as thy being, it can neither be diminished nor augmented. For thy glory is in what thou art, in thy power ever infinite, in thy wisdom ever perfect, in thy goodness ever entire. Let the beings whom thou hast created attempt to will what thou hast not willed, and they but ruin themselves, without ever tarnishing thy glory or thy felicity. By refusing to glorify thee, they but refuse thee thine own, that which was not theirs either to give or to withhold from thee. Yet they have dared to refuse what was their duty to yield; though to have promoted thy glory would have brought honor upon themselves, and secured their true happiness. Their homage, nothing to thee, everything to them, is at once their highest interest, their most solemn obligation. Mirror of the eternal sun, they add nothing to thy splendor, for their radiance is only thine; yet they are not the less bound to reflect its light, and thus by multiplying its rays, to reproduce in each of their souls, its entire image!

Hadst thou restricted the race to a single individual, his works alone would have praised thee; his mute offering would have been understood and accepted by thee; but in the multiplication of the race thou hast laid upon man a new obligation, or rather thou hast added to this obligation a new form of expression. The individual man would never have felt the necessity of praising thee by his works, if when placed in society among his fellows he felt no necessity of praising thee with his lips. In this thou imposest upon him no new duty; if he fulfil it not with alacrity it is evidence that he would never have obeyed thee. The sight of the first individual of his species should have drawn from him all the homage which before had been confined to his own breast. If thy glory were dear to him he could not but seek to reflect and multiply its beams; above all if he felt that thou hadst revealed thyself to him, if he possessed religious convictions (for it is impossible, O God, that thou shouldst not appear more and more adorable in proportion as thou revealest thyself), he would have felt himself constrained for thy glory to declare all he knew of thee; the dimmest discovery of thyself suffices for thy glory, and if thou deignest to speak to man, it cannot be in vain, it cannot but add much to the eternal reasons which he has to praise and bless thee. The fact that thou hast condescended to hold converse with him, this single fact above all else speaks volumes to man, and discovers to him with what love thou regardest him, and of what estimation he is in thine eyes!"

This, it appears to us, is what conscience and nature alike impel us to say to God, and with such force, that if amongst human religions, there be upon the earth one religion from God, it ought to abound and superabound in the acknowledgment of the duty we are enforcing. The glory of God ought to be the principle and end of all precepts, the source and motive of all actions, the grace and dignity of all words. Such a religion ought to bring our whole nature into the service of the glory of God, and should address us thus: "Ye are not your own"—"Glorify God in your bodies and in your spirits which are his." Such a religion ought to make the fulfilment of this duty the great end of our life, and say to us, "Ye have been called to show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." Such a religion ought to make the glory of God the motive of all the good we do, and to recognize as good nothing but what springs from such a source; then will it say to us, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Such a religion demands that the glory of God should enter into the minutest details of our existence, and make everything conducive to it. "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Such a religion requires from us the most frank and explicit confession of our faith; it will expressly attach to such confession the blessing of heaven; and although it does not assure an entrance into the kingdom of heaven to all who cry "Lord! Lord!" it will admit of nothing in exchange or expiation for an ungrateful silence, and will declare without reserve, that whosoever on earth shall have denied his Master, shall be denied by him in the presence of the angels. Finally, such a religion will repudiate all dissimulation of doctrines, will honor heroic testimony, will bless the martyr, and of all religions, alone will transform its disciples and preachers, and establish in its bosom an universal priesthood.

THE IDEA OF THE INFINITE.

(FROM "LA MANIFESTATION DES CONVICTIONS RELIGIEUSES.")

ALTHOUGH the pursuit of wealth and glory, the worship of reason and of the arts, or some social passion seem to absorb the minds of men and satisfy the cravings of the soul—the idea of the Infinite, being that by which all the ideas of the finite are explained and made legitimate—the idea of the Infinite, apart from which and without which man can account for nothing, and for which, therefore, he seeks in every direction—this idea is constantly lurking in the heart of the community, taking there the name of God or of the gods, and thus creating or preserving religion. Willing or unwilling, man is constrained to concern himself with this great subject; the most indifferent yield to it in silence; laws provide for its maintenance; the commonwealth incorporates itself with it; in a word, the whole constitution of human affairs is organized around the idea of God. All the great movements of public life sanction this idea. All great questions, spontaneously or of necessity, are founded upon it. And in proportion as grave circumstances elicit momentous problems, the solutions sought insensibly lead the minds of men to the source whence all social errors or all social truths necessarily spring. That which obviously lies at the basis of the life of the community would appear also the fitting basis of the life of each individual. Not every day, but once for all, this idea would seem to demand of every one an account of his belief, in order that it may be known what he really is; until this is done he is a living enigma, a nameless being, at the moment he names himself, and society imagines that it knows him. If we take at hazard any period of history, this phenomenon will be less striking, but if we take the entire annals of man, we shall see that the first desire of the human breast, a desire which nothing can divert or destroy, is to be enlightened on this subject, both with reference to ourselves and others. The entire life of man is mirrored in religion, the whole of religion in human life; the history of humanity is the history of its creeds; the history of his creeds is the history of man himself. If we take a retrospect of by-gone ages, we shall find that all the great changes in the condition of man were coeval with, or the result of, some great revolution in religious opinion.

Who, after all this, would not conclude that the cause we are pleading is gained in every mind? But we must not take for free consent the universal dominion of a logical necessity. To how many laws does human nature submit without loving them? Especially is this the case with reference to the supremacy of an abstract truth. Long before its claims are acknowledged, it has penetrated into the conscience, and we shall hear its voice, slowly, perhaps, but sure of eventual triumph, reclaiming the world to its obedience. The world will complain, but the world will submit. Thus vanishes the apparent contradiction. Man does not willingly impart to his fellow-man the secrets of his conscience, so long, at least, as nothing in himself but conscience demands the disclosure. Take the mass of mankind: it is not true of them that common consent never permits a curtain to be drawn before that interior stage on which an endless drama is enacted between conscience and passion. But if resistance here prove available to the individual, the law, however slight its influence upon each person, and at any given moment, has its effect upon the whole; it rules society, and keeps the world in awe. It compels us to consider the infinite; forces us to introduce the idea, if not into each act of public and private life, into the very heart of those institutions which regulate the affairs of man.

Away, and forever with the miserable comments of materialism. We leave its recent disciples to treat the infinite as a political invention; they not perceiving that this very invention presupposes a necessity of human nature, and that this necessity is a logical one. Under the pretence of inventing such an idea, what do they but copy nature, and yield the human spirit to its tendencies, to nature and to truth? What indeed is the finite, if the infinite does not exist? What is the relative, without the absolute? Where is reason, where is certainty upon any subject, where is good sense, without this fundamental idea? Who then will comprehend matter without spirit, who explain the material infinite without the spiritual infinite? That such ideas should ever have been treated as paradoxical is one of the most striking proofs of the fall, for they are the first *postulate* of every thought, the first reason of our reason. We are more certain of spirit, than of matter, of the infinite than the finite. This instinctive conviction, enfeebled it may be in some of the members of the human family, and in some apparently destroyed, this intuition of the divine as the explanation of the human, is found in the mass of humanity; this great truth is discovered there, just as the waters of a lake present to view that fine tint of azure which cannot be seen in any of the drops of the liquid mass.

Let us interrogate this humanity, in which man, incomplete, and fragmentary in each individual, again finds himself complete, at least with reference to all the attributes left to him by the fall. Its replies will have this double effect: they will alike teach us what in the eyes of humanity entire, the religious question really is; and what in a matter of such moment, is the necessity and importance of a free profession. The transition from the one idea to the other, is inevitable.

Looking only on the surface of human affairs, one would not say, that the question of religion, in a fixed or positive form, is everywhere present, or that the whole of life is its embodiment; but upon closer examination we shall find that the vulgar empiricism which seems to be the only philosophy of the masses envelops another philosophy. Again, we must not stop at the individual, but view man in his generic character; then we shall acknowledge that he is not so destitute of principles as not to feel the need of them, and that all his opinions, all his life, are referable to some primary ideas. Although all his wants and passions do not render a theory of the universe necessary to him, nevertheless he has formed one; this has been, we venture to say, one of his first cares; indeed, he has seemed incapable of arranging his own life, before having arranged a system of the universe.* That he may have first shaped out his own course, and the universe afterwards, is possible; but it would not be the less true that he has aimed to conform his conduct to the idea he has conceived of the universe, or things as a whole, an aggregate in which God himself is included, if, indeed, God himself be not the centre, the meaning, and so to speak, the essence of the whole. If man, indeed, has wandered in the search from the true path, and his route has sometimes deviated into the errors of pantheism or polytheism,—one fact remains not less certain, namely that his life, separated from the principle of all life, the finite detached from the infinite appears to his reason a supreme absurdity, and any solution of the problem seems to him preferable to the abandonment of all to chance. In the sphere of obligation and of moral responsibility reigns the same logical necessity. To whom are we under obligation—to whom are we responsible? For an answer to this question we cannot look too high. It can belong only to individual philosophies, or rather to those of the schools, to attach the moral life of man to anything less vast than the infinite, less great than God, or to some unknown impersonal infinity. In this last attempt at solution, the dominant law of our nature is still apparent, which is evermore the craving for the infinite. But, while a few subtile spirits cut their own particular pathway, the majority of mankind better inspired, turns itself openly towards the personal infinity, towards God, in whom alone they find the end, the rule, and the sanction of duty.

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* That is, some fundamental principles to account for his own existence, and that of the universe around him. Some ideas of cause, of supremacy, of obligation, in a word of the infinite, and his relations to it, lurk in his mind.—T.

The prejudices of sense and the distractions of life alone conceal from us this imperative necessity, at once rational and moral. Let any cause, for example, a powerful abstraction, suddenly isolate us from the external world, and place us, for a moment, face to face with ourselves, by that very act it will place us face to face with the infinite, with which our existence feels its connection, as soon as inferior relations cease to be felt. In such moments of recollection and self-communion we feel that our true and fundamental relation is with the infinite, that the roots of our being are imbedded there, and that thence our existence derives its meaning. Then we feel that God is the idea of ideas, the truth of truths; that he not only envelops our whole existence, but penetrates its inmost recesses; that the thought of Him claims like Himself, the right of omnipresence, and ought to be mingled with all the elements and with all the successive movements in our life;—that that life to answer its end ought not only once for all, but during each instant, to receive God entire; that He should determine and regulate every pulsation; in a word, that the loftiest of all ideas is also the closest to us, that the sublime and the necessary are one, and that God is the life of the soul.

Whatever else man may do, and whatever pretend, he can act in no way in which his life shall not be the index and rule of his knowledge or ignorance of eternal things. Visibly or invisibly, either in a negative or positive way, all his life has reference to this. Of necessity he has some principles. On the supposition that God is or is not, or simply that God may be, such or such will be the man. The creed determines the character. Every one must acknowledge that the solutions of these primary questions draw after them in the life the gravest consequences; that everything hangs upon this point, that our whole being is modified and determined by it; and that in a general but profound sense, to know what we believe, is to know what we are.

THE ENDLESS STUDY.

PART I.

Mathematical science admits the supposition of two lines which are ever approaching but never meet. If it is not in our power, even with the most delicate instruments, to realize this supposition in the visible world, may we not have the mournful advantage of finding it in our moral existence? St. Paul informs us that there are those who are ever learning but never come to the knowledge of the truth.* This statement, which in the passage referred to is applied only to certain females, "laden with sins, led away by divers lusts," is not, be assured, true only of one of the sexes. Among both a multitude of persons are evidences of its truth, a thing strange at first sight, natural when we examine it more narrowly, and investigate the terms which the apostle has used.

The *truth* of which he speaks in this place includes at once what *we* are, and what *God* is; in the one case the knowledge of our nature, of our moral condition, of our situation in life; in the other, the work which the grace of God has accomplished for our salvation. The truth which St. Paul has in view does not exist as truth but in the union of these two parts. He who has the first without the second, knows not the truth; nay, he who has the second, but only in the intellect, knows it no more than the other. There are, then, two ways of coming short of the truth: either by advancing one half of the road and then stopping, or by advancing into the other half, but only under the guidance of intellect. In either case, we are to be accounted among the persons of whom the apostle says, "they are always learning but never come to the knowledge of the truth." They are ever learning, because each of these parts of the truth is so vast, that we may call it inexhaustible. They never come to the knowledge of the truth, because the truth depends upon two conditions, the first of which is wanting to the one class, the second to the other; the first completing the one half of the truth by its union with the other, the second seizing the truth, not by the intellect alone, but by the heart, by the whole man. This distinction divides into two classes the heirs of the same calamity, or the partakers of the same guilt. It is to these two classes, or these two states, to which we would successively call attention.

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* 2 Tim. iii. 7. "Ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

But let us linger a moment on this side of our subject, and glance at another class of men; those, namely who do not in any way know any portion of the truth; those who, so far from always learning, never learn at all. How is it possible that a man should never learn anything of man, a living being know nothing of life, a Christian (by name) know nothing of God? By shutting against the light all the windows of the soul, by placing at each of its gates a vigilant and sleepless sentinel, under the name of business, of pleasure, or of duty; by not permitting itself to form a single void in its worldly engagements, by living, perhaps under an aspect of seriousness, in giddiness and delirium; by rendering itself insane through a cold and systematic madness; by making of life an eternity, of the flesh a God, of pleasure a religion. Indeed this state of things is sometimes attained even with less difficulty. If, in certain cases, there is some system in this ignorance, because a confused instinct has warned the soul, and, in advance, made it afraid of the truth, it not unfrequently happens that a wretched education has made ignorance the natural atmosphere of the soul, the unchangeable dwelling of the spirit. Prejudices imbibed from infancy and incessantly fortified by example, acquire the life and energy of an instinct, by which profounder and truer instincts are stifled before their birth, like a fire before it bursts into flame. Persons of this description live an earthly life without even suspecting that there is another. They conceive of no higher interests than those of time, scarcely find opportunity to notice them; profoundly asleep, they neither hear the murmurs of conscience nor the mockeries of Satan, who does not hesitate to insult his victims. Their soul is dead, or they would sometimes encounter those higher instincts with which God has fortified our nature: they live only in their sensations, or in the thousand objects which excite them, in their appetites and passions, their earthly hopes and fears. But they do not always live thus, as one might suppose, with violent agitations of passion, but with an air of reason and sobriety, with an order and decorum which give them, in the estimation of the world, the name of sober and solid men, and thus remove from their own minds all idea of disorder, and inspire them, if need be, with confidence in themselves. Thus are they utterly deceived in regard to those things of which God only, and those who have the secret of God, can discover the disorder and folly. For beneath this surface, so calm to our eyes, there is a license of evil, a madness of passion, a revel, so to speak, of all the elements of sin which our nature conceals; as in a house carefully shut and abandoned, in appearance, to the repose of the night, a thousand excesses and disorders are indulged, the noise of which is stifled and the scandal hidden by the thickness of the walls. Thus glide through years and drop into eternity a crowd of lives which, from all that appears, have not, upon that rapid descent, had a single moment to pause and reflect. God only knows, the great day will declare it, how many times the light was presented to their souls, how many warnings rang in their ears, and how often, had they not hastened to extinguish this light and suppress these voices, they might have emerged from their illusion and struck into the way of truth.

This last observation recalls us to our subject. These warnings, multiplied during the life of many persons, and in circumstances the most favorable, often make themselves heard. Indeed it is surprising they do not always make themselves heard. Even in the most ordinary lives, it would seem that everything is adapted to raise, by little and little, the bandage from our eyes. It would seem that all the illusions with which we enter life need not prevent our coming into contact with the truth. Indeed such a thing often occurs to many. This revelation or disenchantment is not the privilege only of old age. The mournful light sometimes breaks upon young eyes. There are times when every one lives more rapidly than usual, when the old age of the soul arrives in the season of hope, like a premature winter on verdure and flowers. Successively one learns to estimate the world, life, and finally himself. True, it does not belong to man, upon these different points, to teach himself the pure truth, the whole truth. That result, coming later, belongs not to us; and the knowledge of the remedy alone can give us the full knowledge of the evil. Nevertheless, it is true that previous to that revelation, we can, by natural means, learn much of the world, of life, and of ourselves. That such information, on account of the sources from which it is derived, may not be perfectly exact and pure I admit; that in detail, many illusions may be replaced by prejudices, I do not doubt; that, in general, such knowledge may be more negative than positive; that it gives us truths less than it removes errors, is certain; but in reducing it to its last analysis, we must admit that it is something, that it embraces a field sufficiently wide, and that it presents a great number of aspects. This is proved by the fact, that since there have been moralists in the world, their aliment has been precisely the study and description of the very things of which we speak. Nor is the supply ever exhausted; it is constantly renewed; the last comers find something to say. Literature itself rests upon this, or attaches itself to it; and each of us, without being either moralist or writer, every day nourishes himself, without exhausting it, on this bitter substance. In a word, as the apostle says, we are "ever learning."

The *world, life,* and *ourselves,* such is the triple object of this knowledge. This order is not unnatural;

it is that of our disenchantment. If we open upon life with equal confidence in these three objects, one after another, they cease to inspire us. Before judging life and ourselves, we judge society and the world. It is from our fellow-creatures and our relations to them, that, at first, we expected happiness—noble tendency of a soul created for love, formed to unite its life with the life of others, and seek its felicity from the invisible world. This hope, the first to blossom, is the first to fade. We dreamed of perfection in the objects of our attachment, because we were irresistibly impelled to dream of it somewhere, and not seeking it where it was, we were obliged to seek it where it was not. We required, (a thing as natural as unjust,) an infinite love which we ourselves could not offer in return, and which, for the same reason, no one could give us. What then is our disappointment, when instead of that complete devotion of the heart, we meet only cool friendship, instead of generosity scarcely justice; when from those attachments we nourished with such care, we see springing hatred itself! But it does not occur to our minds that the observations which we make on other men, they all make on us; that we furnish occasion for the same contempt, after being the objects of the same illusions. Thus, we do not yet know ourselves, and consequently do not accuse ourselves.

Beyond the circle of our personal relations, we seek, in the past and in the present, characters whom we can admire. We have believed that such exist. Historians have aided our delusion; they have seen in the distance of ages their lineaments beautified by the effect of perspective, softened by that uncertain light which diffuses itself around antique forms. We have embraced, as they were offered, these grand personages. A crowd of ideal images of men and nations, of actions and events, of characters and manners have emerged before us from the shadows of the past;—a vision of glory which has never lasted. Here again, to know is to count our losses. History better studied, the past controlled by the view of the present, has, one after another, torn from us our idols; we have become better informed, that is to say, in the portrait of man, we have seen the shadows deepening. Our ideal, as if on wing, wanders through the void, seeking a place of rest, for this is the law of our being, but finding none.

Nevertheless, the power of hoping, of flattering ourselves, is not destroyed with a single blow. Many more times we permit ourselves to be caught in the net of appearances. Often we catch at the bait, but always with less confidence and abandonment; till, finally, taught by experience, we form to ourselves a philosophy, and so agree to regard as an exception, as an unexpected blessing, what at first claimed to be the rule. We undeceive ourselves, as it were, in advance, so as not afterwards to be disappointed; we hope for nothing, in order to have occasion to rejoice over a little. As all this revolution of sentiment takes place gradually, it does not produce a violent state of the soul; that which, included in a description of a few lines, resembles despair, spread over a number of years, is only a gentle cooling of our hopes. The majority of men scarce perceive the change that is wrought in them; they always appear to have thought the same; no suffering sufficiently acute, has accompanied the loss of their illusions. They call it a spirit calmed, a youth passed away, the sober privilege of old age. Indeed, they almost applaud, almost congratulate themselves on the attainment. Yet there are persons to whom circumstances render such a revolution exceedingly painful. Indignation is incessantly rising in their bosom, and expressing itself in words and looks. A bitter resentment becomes the temper of the soul. They are wrong in their bitterness, as the former in their resignation. If we ought not to felicitate ourselves on such misconceptions, neither ought we to be irritated on their account. What right have we to be irritated at that, in other men, which exists in ourselves? Grief, not anger, is appropriate here. But in that first period of our experience, what we know least is ourselves; and we have one more disenchantment to experience, before we reach that final one.

In this judgment of mankind, life is judged in advance. When the lustre with which we have embellished our species is dissipated, when it is no longer in the moral world, but in space and in time, that we have to find the value of life, it appears that the question itself is resolved by the manner in which it is put. It appears, when one is reduced to ask of life, What hast thou to give me in years, in riches, in glory, in pleasure? that the answer is almost a matter of indifference. But who looks at things from a position so elevated? In the case of a great number of men, no other question has preceded this; and those even who have begun to demand of life a more elevated felicity, disappointed in their expectation, after all, do not renounce what may be called the shreds of life, or the dregs of happiness. A sort of melancholy logic leads them to intoxicate themselves with those dregs, in which they may lose the remembrance of the dreams which have deceived them.

There are not wanting examples of a transition from enthusiasm to materialism, nor are there wanting reasons that explain how such a transition takes place. No one voluntarily abandons his share of the banquet; every one wishes to live, that is to say, every one grasps at new illusions, after the loss of the first.

It might be thought, indeed, that these new illusions would not vanish, like the first. Long after persons have ceased to believe in humanity, they yet cleave to pleasure, to glory, to life; to pleasure, that is, the flesh; to glory, that is, the esteem of beings whom they have ceased to esteem; to life, that is, to a duration which passes away. The eagerness with which these different objects are pursued, might induce us to think that they yet possessed our entire confidence. But here let us make two observations.

In the first place, the question is not, whether such eager pursuit will continue, but whether, from the commencement of your career to the point which you have reached, you have not dropped, as a runner in the ancient games, some of the flowers which crowned your heads; whether you judge life now, as you did at its opening? The reply to that question will soon present itself.

In the second place, perseverance in the pursuit does not prove, that faith in the objects of such pursuit has not suffered a sad diminution. Nay more, you may see the ardor of pursuit increasing, in the same measure that faith diminishes. Why? Because the soul must be filled with something. There is a necessity of living, and of nourishing life, on whatever aliment we can find. The prodigal son, accustomed to the delicacy and abundance of his father's table, in his exile willingly nourished himself upon the husks which the swine did eat.

If the soul did not require nourishment, it would yet need a pursuit; and this necessity of action impels it towards all ends at once. Undeceived, it is not cured; indeed, it cannot be cured; in the day that this should happen, it would die. It hopes as little as possible; it has ceased to hope; it only seeks. It is in the nature of things, that as the soul falls, the rapidity of its fall increases; that while advancing in its course, and seeing life incessantly impoverished, it clings more eagerly to what remains. Whence it comes to pass, that those who are the most completely disenchanted appear to be the least so; and those who curse life the most bitterly, seem to be the most devoted to its interest. Those who are nearest the idol, are despisers of the idol.

Let not appearances deceive us in reference to the fact. The truth is, in entering upon life, we count upon it. If we are warned of its vanity, we do not the less confide in it; the experience of another never becomes our own; the highest authority, the declarations even of Divine Wisdom, cannot preserve us from all illusion. In this order of things it may be said that, from the very beginning, each increase of knowledge is a disenchantment. Strange science, which consists not in filling, but only in emptying the soul! After this, do not go and represent the world as a collection of men disgusted. Say only, that with the exception of a number of blind and stupid persons, (and there are men of intelligence among these stupid ones,) all men are more or less undeceived and disappointed; that in this properly consists the science of life, and, repeating what we have already said, to "learn" is to estimate the misery of life.

Here details are superfluous—no one needs that I should recount his history. But a particular fact claims our attention.

I have spoken of pleasure, of glory, of duration. Has life nothing more, nothing better than these? Yes, certainly, there are science and virtue—these things also are a part of life, and their value, which on earth is unequalled, does not seem in danger of suffering diminution. Have we seen the stars of the sky grow pale? And shall we see the splendor of the stars of the moral world fade away? Science, that disinterested, divine instinct, which attaches itself to nothing carnal, which in itself alone reveals our august origin!—Science, which detaches us from the external world, separates us from ourselves; disengages us from the chains of matter, and transports us from the midst of dull realities into the pure atmosphere of the *ideal!*—Science, one of the attributes of the Divinity, one of the marks of his image in man!—I know well that it has nobly engrossed entire lives. But every soul endowed with any elevation, that is, with anything of earnestness, cannot fail in its estimate of so noble a subject, to seek a unity, a completeness which shall be worthy of itself; for science, after all, is not the whole of life, it is only one of its elements. The soul must seek unity and harmony here. It ought, so to speak, to find a head for that crown; a pedestal for that statue; a sky for that sun. Are these the head, the life, and the soul of man? Everywhere the disproportion strikes us. Everywhere the dignity of the details reveals the wretchedness of the whole: we know not how so noble an element can have lost itself in so mournful a chaos; and life which already appeared to us little in its own littleness, now appears still more so, in the grandeur of that very instinct, of that very interest which it ought to contain, but which transcends it. So that if we do not directly contract a disgust for science, at least, the feeling of its being out of place; in a word, the impossibility of attaching it worthily to life, astonishes, overwhelms us. How many men of genius have been seized with a profound sadness at this very thought! How many, appalled by the problems and contradictions which science suggests in the present condition of man, in the midst of their enthusiasm have doubted, whether it be a gift of God, or a temptation of a demon! How many, moreover, seeing it corrupted by our passions, and in its turn nourishing and irritating these passions, unfaithful as it appears to its origin and vocation, have beheld in it one of our direst calamities; nay, the source of all our calamities!

"But virtue," you will say, "leave us in life the charm of virtue, and the whole of life is saved." In some sense, of course, it is impossible to cease confiding in virtue, that is to say, in the necessity, the sanctity and inviolability of duty. It is impossible for him who has once exercised it, even in a single and isolated instance, not to find in the impression thence derived a proof, that virtue is a reality, the noblest of realities. But I affirm that the more irresistible such a conviction, the more insupportable to the soul its inability to solve the difficulties which the presence of that great idea suggests. The same theory which is required with reference to science is also required with reference to virtue; so that the question recurs, to what in life does it conform? Will you make it conform to the welfare of society? This, doubtless, is one of its results; but it cannot be its end; your own consciousness, and the very notion of virtue prove this. Is it then the interest of the individual? But what interest? If material or physical interest is in question, virtue consists in sacrificing it to the first claim of duty. If internal satisfaction, the end is noble, but it is too narrow: for unless that satisfaction be the approbation of our self-love, the suffrage of which cannot be the end of virtue, it would not suffice us. What is sometimes said of conscience is thoughtless and vain; in the long run its testimony does not satisfy us; indeed, it is of no value unless it certify us, that a judge of whom our conscience is only the representative, is satisfied also. We need an approver, and that approver must be a person; for we are unwilling to be the servants, the friends, the children of a mere idea; we desire to attach ourselves to something more vital than *moral order*, that is, to a Being, to a Soul in whom our life may find an echo. The true name of the satisfaction to which genuine virtue aspires is *glory*. Shall we seek it among men? Virtue is tarnished by that very search. Shall we seek it elsewhere? That can only be with God. But let us beware of confounding God with his name, of taking a word for a being. Where is God, and where is the road which leads to God, in order that we may receive the homage of our virtuous actions? That road is found by the heart alone—has our heart found it? Does our heart rise, rise with all our life, to God? Do we seek the favor of God? Do we live according to his will, and in the hope of his approbation? In a word, does our virtue find its issues in him? When we have laid our offering upon his altar, have not our passions come during the night, and removed it to another altar, which, if it is not what our conscience, alas! is what our heart has chosen? Does not our virtue, after all, return, by a circuitous path, to ourselves? Do we not take with the one hand what we have given with the other? If on the other hand, God be the first and last term of our virtue, and his love the fire of our moral life, I would say, that by that fact alone, life, in effect, is saved, all illusions are replaced by the truth, all contempt is forever banished. But, whoever cannot bear his testimony that virtue has been conceived and practised by him in such a spirit as this, is not placed beyond the common destiny; with reference to virtue, as to everything else, he is doomed to disappointment. Pressed by a double necessity to recognize the reality, the sovereignty of virtue, but not knowing where to place it; not finding for it in the life any spot sufficiently large, any basis sufficiently firm, attracted towards virtue and repelled from it by turns; believing in duty, yet not believing in it; he is driven by the incessant return of this moral oscillation, far from that glorious dawn of life, in which nothing dimmed to his eyes, the reality of virtue, or the certainty of its promises.

Thus even that which is greatest and truest detaches itself, like a flower, from the crown of convictions and hopes which encircled our youthful brow; the disenchantment of virtue is added to the number of our losses, or, if you please, to our science, and from the whole of life, in which we trusted with such delightful assurance, nothing entire remains.

Nay more, even if everything remained entire, we should only feel the more keenly the grief of another discovery, which we cannot escape. All-adorned with these illusions, life precipitates itself towards death.

Thither it hurries, with a constantly increasing pace. Every one knows, when beginning life, that he cannot live always; but who could have expected to live so brief a period? Who, at least, did not expect that years would be equal to years? Who could have thought that each would be shorter than the preceding, that the velocity of time would forever increase, and without diminishing the number of our years, would actually reduce the length of our career? None—no, not one; and so true is this, that the younger portion of my readers will not credit me, with reference to this flight of time; they will not believe it until they have proved it by experience. In a word, it is only by living that we become undeceived with reference to life,—this illusion, so necessary, is the last which leaves us.

See, then, what it is to learn. The matter is vast, and however life may be abridged, an entire one would not suffice for it; should we live an age, we should ever be learning. If you say that the logical conclusion from all this is despair, you are perhaps right; happily, man does not submit his destiny to the mercy of logic. The charm of living is great; in the privation of all other blessings, living is yet something; and what otherwise is life entirely despoiled? Providence has been so liberal to man, that man has not been able to nullify all his gifts; there still remain sufficient blessings to attach us to life, which were intended to attach us to God; we feel ourselves impoverished rather than poor, and although this very feeling may be worse than poverty itself, yet as we do not realize it, except feebly and at intervals, it leaves us more happiness than most persons imagine, a happiness which lasts so long as we are ignorant that the majority of our losses is our own work, and that we possess infinitely less than was destined for us. But that, too, we learn at last; and this is the third topic of instruction which I proposed to discuss.

We begin by observing that there are two ways of knowing ourselves, the one natural, the other I will call supernatural: the first, limited, incomplete; the second going to the bottom of the subject and exhausting it; the first more extensive than profound, the second boundless in every respect. From the first knowledge to the second there is an abyss which God only can fill; and he fills it by making himself known to the soul; then it is that the soul knows itself truly; for the secret of its evil being found to consist in its separation from its centre, which is God, its reunion with its centre must at the same time be its supreme revelation as well as its sovereign remedy. But before that divine ray falls into its darkness, a true ray, though less vivid, may penetrate the upper strata of its shadows; up, therefore, to a certain point, man, reduced to natural means, to the teachings of time and experience, may succeed in knowing himself. But what is the nature of this knowledge? Does it pass, from a deep conviction of its feebleness, to a lofty notion of its strength? Or do its discoveries follow the very opposite direction?

Who among us, arrived at mature age, (I make an abstraction of the influence of the Gospel,) finds himself stronger, better, and purer than he imagined himself in the days of his youth? Who on the contrary does not, with regret, remember the confidence in his own nature, with which he entered the world? When few passions had taken possession of our heart, and little responsibility attached to our actions, no visible object interposed between us and virtue! Virtue, in itself so beautiful, appears to us in her own colors so long as we have no interest to tarnish her image. Man, indeed, does not hate it for itself, but for the checks it puts upon his desires. If its presence brought no constraint, and its aspect no humiliation, he would never cease to rely upon it, and to find it beautiful and attractive. Such is his disposition at the beginning of his career, and such the ground of his confidence in himself. He loves virtue in view of the benefit she confers ; he confidently calculates that such benefit will turn to his account ; for he calculates without reference to his passions, which he does not yet know. But these passions come ; they claim their part in life, and that part is the whole ; passion on one side, virtue on the other, is equally exacting, equally insatiable ; but passion is a real and living being, that is, the man himself; and virtue, why, that is an idea, until it is united, in our soul, to the thought of God, and thus becomes, I do not say a passion, but the strongest, the most dominant of all affections. In that struggle between a being and a principle, between life and an idea, most evident it is that being and life must prevail ; and the only revenge of the vanquished idea, is to raise in the soul a murmur, now plaintive, now threatening, which gradually subsides as life is prolonged. In the first days of his moral life, what high estimate has he of the sanctity of virtue, and the impossibility, so to speak, of violating it! What relish for purity, what disgust for everything which taints it! What astonishment at the baseness and perversity of mankind ! What ignorance of their ways ! what ignorance of their calculations and aims ! what burning indignation against evil ! what vows, what promises to combat it with his testimony, to abash it by his example ! what certainty of remaining conqueror! what recoil even at the thought of its touching him! Evil, nevertheless, is already here, the ideal is even now tarnished; his very first experiences have been falls; but in that era of thoughtlessness we count less with reference to the falls we have suffered, than those which we are not to suffer. Happy age! dreams of hope! how prompt are ye to fade away!

One after another the passions present themselves—we resist them at first, then treat with them. In that unequal discussion, the only thing which is ordinarily obtained is, to simplify our defeat and shame; that is, to yield to one passion which takes the place of many others incompatible with it; we are vanquished, but it is only by one conqueror; we give conscience credit for a result which is only due to necessity; we are unwilling to see that in ceding to this one passion the claims of all the rest, we have in reality yielded to the whole! But of what value is this miserable illusion? We are vanquished, and we know it. We no longer doubt our failures, and the only question is, how shall we resign ourselves to them, how accommodate ourselves to this new world into which we have entered under the guidance of sin, how suffer the manners which but lately disgusted us, how make the calculations of interest which we never wished to make, how acclimate ourselves in that society which we regarded with such distant and lofty contempt! Then must we submit to the intercourse and familiarities of a despicable fraternity. Precipitated from the heights of life into the darkness where so many have preceded us, we must see all the dead who have gone before us lift themselves at our approach, and cry out, "Aha! art thou become as one of us!" Then must we learn (O most mournful of all experiences!) to despise ourselves! Yes, we must know and bear *ourselves.*

Self-knowledge—but how is that possessed? It is interesting to see how. Man does not so soon take part in his own degradation, and never resigns himself to it entirely. At each step he takes in life, he needs to persuade himself that he is advancing right; and from the need of delusion, delusion itself springs, which, impossible in reference to the whole, is possible in reference to details. He knows himself very well in general, but, in each particular, he is ignorant. He despises himself with reference to the sum-total of his actions, and yet has some ground of approbation as to each of them. He performs each (I speak of our ordinary actions) with a sort of conviction as to its propriety; he is, so to speak, conscientious in his sin, faithful in his falsehood—a circumstance which gives to his conduct, to his discourse a feature of amiableness and worth, the impression of which upon others is so much more sure as he himself has been the first to receive it.

But will not the knowledge of ourselves, however general it may be, at least have the effect of reconciling us to humanity and to life, when we recognize that we partake of the feelings of the first, and that it is ourselves who abstract from the second the greater part of its value and beauty? Will not the last part of our mournful knowledge alleviate the impression of the two first? That were just, but it is not natural. Nothing sweet, nothing pure can spring from that which humbles without softening us. The wrongs of life and of society aggravate our own. The more we are compelled to hate ourselves, the more we hate that which surrounds us. Our internal discontent is a gall which spreads itself over all objects. Here we can see how the logic of the heart overpowers that of the intellect. Nothing could be more agreeable to the latter than to cherish indulgence for the faults of which we feel ourselves guilty: but if we study ourselves thoroughly, we shall find that it is precisely those very faults to which we are inexorable. It is precisely such that we penetrate the most readily, of which we most perfectly detect the secret, in our neighbor; we hate them in him, with all the hatred which we withhold from them in ourselves; we tear from our own hearts, to thrust into that of our brethren, the dart with which we feel ourselves pierced; we punish our failings in the person of others. Our fellow-men, in spite of themselves, have us for confidants and judges of their most secret movements, which we have divined, prophesied, signalized in advance; we penetrate the whole sin, and the consequences of it, in their scarcely formed intention. Thus, the discoveries which we have made in our own hearts find those which are analogous to them in the hearts of others; less frequently does the observation of others enable us more fully to know ourselves. But however this may be, the field of our observation is constantly enlarging; each day increases the treasure of our bitter science; we are always learning, but never come to the knowledge of the truth.

I admit, indeed, that all these things are truths, but not *the truth*. It is with such truths as it is with a mass of words and phrases thrown upon paper at hazard, and without order. Perhaps the totality of these words and phrases may compose an admirable poem; but the poem is not there, until the poet arrive, and from these scattered elements reconstruct his masterpiece, by impressing upon them the unity of his living thought. These truths which we have acquired, in spite of ourselves, however clear and certain each may appear, form, in our minds, nothing but a disordered chaos, a mass of contradictions. Can this chaos, these contradictions be the truth? The truth, well understood, ought to have one or the other of two opposite effects; either to overwhelm us with irreparable despair, or afford us immeasurable consolation, either to render us entirely miserable, or entirely happy: but what we have learned from humanity, from life, and ourselves, has not a sufficiently decided character to produce either the one or the other of these effects. There remains something to that humanity which we hate, to that life which we despise, to that heart which we feel agitated by such opposing sentiments. Something always occurs to divert our hatred, our ennui, and our humiliation. Something even mingles itself with our misfortune, which either stifles it or lulls it to sleep. We are not happy, we are not satisfied; conscience, interrogated in the silence of reflection, declares that we cannot live so: we live nevertheless, we resign ourselves, we get accustomed to our fate; we breathe a tainted air, after all it is air; and the human heart, banished from its natural atmosphere, which is that of certainty and peace, accustoms itself, like the old navigator, to rocking on the abyss, to sleeping amidst the storms.

But every time he enters within himself, a voice distinctly cries to him, that, after having learned so many things, he does not know the truth. Join to that voice of conscience the apostolic voice of St. Paul. In his estimation the truth has not the two aspects which human ignorance is obliged to give it; for him it is not despair or peace, misfortune or happiness—it is happiness alone, peace alone. In him the question is resolved by a decisive fact. The truth, in his mind, has nothing but beneficent qualities. The truth calms; but, in spite of all your discoveries, you have not peace. The truth sanctifies; but, after learning so much, you are not holy. The truth humbles; but all your experience has not inspired you with humility. The truth makes free; but, wise as you are, freedom is not yet yours. The truth walks with charity: it inspires, it commands generosity, but your mournful studies have only rendered more relentless the severity of your judgments; and, in the result, you have learned to be indulgent only to yourselves. How then can you possess the truth, if these are its characteristics? And what reason has the Apostle to say, that while always learning, ye never come to the knowledge of the truth!

But do you seek for that truth, the absence of which you feel so much? Not even that. You have learned just enough to know that you do not possess it; the natural, the imperative conclusion from all your acquisitions, simply enables you to feel your poverty; but you are willing to be poor, in that manner; for, in your estimation, the consciousness of such poverty is actually wealth. "Pride," says a Christian genius, "counterbalances all our miseries;" "it is something, even," he says again, "to feel our misery;" but he has not told us, that it is everything: and how many people are thus persuaded! Yes, pride counterbalances all our miseries. Yes, the deplorable satisfaction of having, better than others, seen the degradation of our nature and our condition; the pleasure of making a parade of our unfortunate penetration; the vanity of emerging from a crowd of credulous ones, and taking our place among the disenchanted; the unnatural joy of displaying our wounds, and those of the world;—this it is which pays us for the sacrifice of the truth.* But if the flatterers of mankind ought to be pitied, what sentiments ought those to inspire, who, with levity of heart, with a savage pleasure, make it the subject of their satire, and lead us, with impious jests and diabolical laughter, to the funeral of hope? What name shall we give to those, who, without any necessity, insult us with the display of a malady without a remedy, of a misfortune without a consolation? Certainly, if ever the influence of the Prince of Darkness must appear, it is when shedding light upon the most afflicting aspects of human condition, incessantly calling our attention thither, multiplying discoveries upon the subject, and intoxicating our pride by the picture of our misery, he arrests us at the limit which it is so desirable to pass, and represses the noblest of all curiosity by that fatal word which formerly sealed the condemnation of the Just One—"What is truth?"

"What is truth?" Whatever a boding voice may say, and whatever response, in accordance with this, may be given by the evil passions of our nature, we desire to know it—we desire to know the truth—nay, we desire thoroughly to possess it; for it exists. But there are two ways of receiving it: may we know which is good!

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* See Montaigne.

THE ENDLESS STUDY.

PART II.

The truth, which we have so often named, without defining it, in the preceding discourse, is the truth of the Gospel.

Truth one and complex, it unites the knowledge of ourselves and of God—of ourselves in relation to God, of God in relation to us; in other words, condemnation and salvation, the fall and the restoration.

This truth is *the* truth—the complete revelation of all which on earth we need to know, touching ourselves and God. It leaves beyond it a thousand objects of knowledge; but with reference to its own object, the incomparable importance of which casts all others into the shadow, it leaves nothing essential to be desired by him who receives it. And, what is admirable! complete at its first reception, offered to us entire and at once, susceptible, so to speak, of being embraced at a single glance, or imbibed at a single inspiration, it is nevertheless progressive; its radiance ever increases during the longest career; its aspects multiply with the aspects of life; always the same, it is always new; an instant suffices to possess it, ages will not suffice to fathom it:—in which sense, it is also an endless study.

This truth, the substance of which is a fact which we have not to create, and which we could not even conceive, has been revealed to us; and as it does not belong to us to create it, so it does not depend upon us to believe it. The impossibility of believing truly, without the aid of the Holy Spirit, is a part of that very truth, and is one of the objects of Christian faith. Nevertheless, so far from wanting in affinity to our nature, it finds a correspondence there, and closely unites itself with our deepest and strongest instincts. It fills the void, illumines the darkness, binds the disordered elements, and forms the whole into a divine unity. Not only does it make itself believed, but felt; appropriated, the soul does not distinguish it from its primal beliefs, from that natural light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. In a word, born in a region infinitely higher than our reason and nature, it unites itself, and forms a consistent whole, with those immutable truths to which nature and reason bear testimony. Only, it is not our thoughts which extend themselves to it; but it is this truth which, descending from the centre of inaccessible light, comes to add itself to our thoughts.

Thence it is evident, that in the acquisition of the truth, we do not remain neutral and inactive; nay more, this demands and puts in operation the deepest and most energetic powers of our nature. Although all the grace and glory are due to the Divine Spirit, the acquisition of the truth is more than an event in our life, it is an act; an act the most moral, the most profound which we can consummate; an act which we are under obligation to perform in a manner more peculiar than any other; an act to which we can be exhorted, in which we can be directed, and on account of which we can be approved or blamed.

Thus, wnen St. Paul speaks to us of persons who are ever learning without ever coming to the knowledge of the truth, it is not simply a misfortune, but a fault, which he indicates. This fault is not only that of the men whom we have spoken of in a preceding discourse, of those men who, instructed in so many single truths respecting human nature, themselves, and life, proceed no further, and stop short of the truth which is offered and announced to them. This fault belongs to another class of men, who having, as it appears, penetrated further, and passed the limit which separates natural from supernatural revelation, having, in a word, accepted the truth of the Gospel, have not seized it as it ought to be seized; who, instead of assimilating the truth to their whole being, have appropriated it only to their understanding, to that, namely, which is most exterior in their interior nature. These men, in a sphere, in appearance far above that of the first, can, like them, learn much, can learn unceasingly, but never come to the knowledge of the truth; in a word, while having the truth, they remain strangers to the truth.

If any one should deem it strange that we can appropriate a fact by the intellect, and yet not know it, we would refer him not only to the New Testament, which everywhere supposes what we affirm, which everywhere designates by the name of *knowledge* something which is more than an act or a condition of the mind, but we would refer him also to the very nature of things and the import of words. Knowledge has different instruments and different conditions, according to its different objects. We know by the eye things of sight, by the ear those of hearing, by the heart those of the heart, by the intellect ideas of all things. The intellect, then, appropriates only the ideas of things, not their impression, their reality. If it suffices in science, properly so called, which has for its object only the ideas of things, with their logical connection, it does not suffice in the sphere of facts, the end of which is, to be put in immediate contact with the living forces of the soul, and which, without such contact, lose their character, and so far as that relation is concerned, their existence.* Doubtless, in this kind of knowledge, as in all others, the understanding has its functions to perform, but the truth is not arrested by the mirror which it presents to it; it passes through that, in order to be reflected in the more interior mirror of the soul. Indeed we may say with reference to truths of that sort, that they are not perceived or comprehended, except as they reach that part of our nature which is the seat of our affections, and consequently the true centre of our life.

The world is accustomed to give to the word truth a sense too narrow and too particular. It is regarded commonly only as the conformity of the representation with the object represented; but truth may reside in facts as well as in ideas. The conformity of means with the end, of action with principle, of life with idea, these also are truth: what we call virtue is nothing else than truth in disposition and action. In the matter of morals, truth cannot be separated from life, it is life itself. And if, instead of passing into the life, it remain in the thought, it merits not the name of truth. When you ask me if I am in the truth, you do not ask what I know, but what I am.

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* That is, they have an objective, but not a subjective existence. They do not exist for us. They might as well not exist at all.—T.

In applying these ideas to Christian truth, we find, that to be in the truth is to become, by our affections and our conduct, like to Jesus Christ; it is to follow him, spiritually, in all the events through which he has passed, in his death by our death to sin, in his resurrection by our regeneration, in his invisible glory by our life hid with him in God; in a word, it is spiritually to re-live the entire life of Jesus Christ. This only can be called knowing the truth, living in the truth.

If religion is something more than a science, if it is a life flowing from a fact, it is clear that it cannot spring from the intellect alone; and whoever sees in it only a system of ideas, is yet without the truth. Nay, should he give all possible attention to each of these ideas, their mutual relations, and their combination, and in each of these departments daily make some new discovery, all his progress would not conduct him a single step towards the truth. What he has learned may be exactly *true*, but it is not the *truth*.

Let us take a glance at the vast field of religious speculation. We find there, first of all, facts to be confided to our memory: religion is interlaced in the tissue of a long history, which stretches from the first days of the world, through many generations of empires, and carries along with it all the names and all the recollections which envelop the history of the universe. What personages with their characteristics, what institutions with their principles, what events with their causes it presents for our consideration, from the fate of the first pair to the present condition of human society, so complicated and so problematical! What facts are attached to each of these facts! how their aspects multiply as we gaze! how reflection renews incessantly that wondrous picture! But the history upon which religion is founded must be believed, and consequently proved. Here opens to the activity of the intellect an arena still more vast. The precautions of a good and serious faith have opened a route which the prejudices of scepticism, and involuntary doubts born of successive discoveries have greatly enlarged, and which, ready to close itself up, is re-opened unceasingly, to close itself anew, and then to be re-opened once more. An objection abandoned permits another to rise; the field of discussion changes from epoch to epoch; religion is attacked on its historical basis, with the natural sciences, with monuments, with metaphysics, or rather with all the repugnances of the heart, aided by all the resources of the intellect; and the truth, after having vanquished a thousand adversaries which ever rise again, sees a thousand others spring up with new weapons, or to speak with more accuracy, imbued with the spirit of a new age; so that the believer who turns to this quarter his intellectual activity, will find, if he pleases, sufficient employment for his entire life. If from the domain of the apologetic, he passes into that of Christian philosophy, what an immense career opens before him!

The system of Christianity, that is to say, the relations of its different parts among themselves, and of the whole to one central idea, to one end; the comparison of that religion with human nature, with reference to which God, so to speak, has taken the measure, and traced the plan; the explanation, alternately, of Christianity by nature, and of nature by Christianity; the definition of the Christian spirit and its application to the details of life; the harmony of this with all other systems, each of which, being incapable of containing or of explaining all facts, has left some great chasm which Jesus Christ has filled, an immense difficulty which he has caused to disappear; in a word, the harmonizing by Christianity, and by it alone, of all the contradictions, of all the desperate qualities of which our life and our nature even, seem to be formed.*—These will give you an idea, but a feeble one, of the infinite speculations in which the study of Christian philosophy can engage a reflective mind. But this is not all. Religion may be contemplated as a fact taking place among all those which compose human life, controlling them, imposing upon them its character, constraining them to unity, whether with itself or with one another; penetrating, now with the weight of its mass, now with the energy of its action, or the irresistible charm of its influence, into the most extended spaces, and into the remotest corners of human existence; powerful sap of the tree, whose trunk is buried deep in the soil, and which flows imperceptibly to the most delicate extremities of the branches. Private life and public society, laws and manners, literature and the arts, everything relating to the government of material interests, becomes Christian under the influence of Christianity; it converts all things into its own substance; with it, everything becomes religion; a perfect connection, at once logical and moral, is established between all the parts of human life; that life loses none of its natural elements, it sacrifices only dangerous superfluities already condemned by the sages of all time; it preserves more than those austere spirits desired to retain, whom the feebleness of their means constrained to exaggeration, and who imposed upon human nature by so much more as they were the less capable of inspiring it. I might say much more. But I stop here, for fear I should stop too late; for I should transcend all bounds by undertaking to indicate, I do not say new subjects of study, but merely to recall those which have long ago been discussed. Judge then by this, what a harvest of ideas grows in this last domain, and combining, by thought, those spheres, each of which might absorb a man entire, acknowledge that the intellect, applied to religion, might find there, according to St. Paul, matter for endless study.

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* *Dualities*—that is, the opposite poles of truth, or the apparently contradictory aspects, which it always involves; such as the finite and the infinite, the conditioned and the unconditioned, the created and the uncreated, the material and the immaterial, the human and the divine, the God absolute, the God revealed, the God infinite and therefore incomprehensible, the God personal and therefore known.—T.

Yes, endless study, without ever coming to the knowledge of the truth. But you will say to me, can it be so? is it really so? Yes,—examples abound; they have abounded at all times. This fact answers both your questions. If the fact appear to you inconceivable, then am I astonished at your astonishment, for it is perfectly clear that reasoning does not necessarily terminate in feeling; for when thought is preoccupied more with the idea of a fact than with the fact itself, the idea remains, and the fact escapes. It is as if the light of the sun should prevent a man from seeing the sun. In vain are the ideas connected with Christianity numerous and beautiful. Their very number and beauty become a snare which hinders us from going further; the interest of curiosity absorbs all other interests. In vain are those ideas so close to the truth that they appear the substance itself; a new snare this, greater than the first; if they were at a greater distance, and completely foreign to it, illusion would not be possible; so that it has been frequently remarked, that labors the most distant from Christian speculation, provided they are not in opposition to Christian morality, are less fitted to withdraw the soul from that which ought to be its principal object on earth. Often better by far, for the religious life of the heart, to be a merchant, an artist, a mathematician, than a theologian.*

But what is it, to be out of the truth, except to be contrary to the truth? To accept it, but in a spirit different from its own, what else is this but to give it the lie, to deny it in fact, while recognizing it in principle, and thus tacitly to protest against the designs and plan of God? He has embodied the truth, and we disembody it. He has given us realities, and we give him back ideas. He has created a world, and we make it a system. He has caused to rise upon us the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in his beams; but we refuse the heat of that glorious orb, which is light and heat at once, and accept only the light. But what am I saying—that we accept the light? God has designed (and that is one of the most remarkable traits of his work) to take away from us the idea that we can invent the light, and draw the truth from our own thoughts; he has designed to disabuse us respecting the all-sufficiency of our reason, and induce us to submit to the truth. But on condition of considering it only with our understanding, that is to say, ourselves, instead of submitting to the truth, we submit only to ourselves. By applying our intellect to revelation, we make it in some measure our own work, we replace faith by philosophical certainty, we submit to ourselves, not to that "demonstration of power" of which the Holy Spirit is the author, but to the argumentation of the schools; so that Jesus Christ finds in us partisans rather than disciples, sectarians rather than believers. Elaborated by our intellect, his Gospel becomes our Gospel, his revelation our philosophy, his mysteries our logical necessities, Jesus Christ another necessity of the same kind, and God himself the mere product of our thought. Is not this to go contrary to the designs of God, and falsely to inscribe ourselves Christians, if not contrary to the letter, at least to the spirit of his declarations, to be Christians in a way the least Christian, and to destroy the Gospel by pretending to establish it?

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* This is strikingly demonstrated by the history of theological polemics. The world has seen no deeper sceptics and enemies of the truth, than the theological speculators of France and Germany. Nay, among ourselves are some, who, occupying the sacred desk, are doing all they can to destroy the Gospel.

Here I might further inquire, if these thoughts, to consider them only as thoughts, are entirely conformed to those of God; if these formulas, which we have constructed, and which every Christian, I presume, will accept without difficulty, signify in our mind, exactly the same thing which they do in his; if, indeed, they do not, under a perfect similarity of language, conceal a very great difference of ideas? Consider, whether or not any one can distinguish, as we have done, in the matter of religion, what belongs to the intellect, and what to the heart, that truth, nevertheless, is *one*, and derives its character only from the combination of thought and feeling applied to the same fact, so that we cannot have the whole of the feeling, without the whole of the thought; nor the whole of the thought, without the whole of the feeling. The whole truth is not perfectly conceived, but by the whole man; and although it may be impossible for the Christian in reality to describe that in which he differs from the Christian in thought, although he finds, in despite of a confused sentiment of discordance, a certain harmony upon many points, and language itself fails to indicate the delicate shades of difference,—yet these shades, in their delicateness, are infinitely important. Could they be expressed in language, it would be found even, that the thought of these two persons is not exactly parallel; and that, in a relation purely speculative, the Christian in idea does not possess all the truth which is possessed by the Christian complete.

We have one more step to take together; and perhaps your reflections have already anticipated it. The exclusive application of the intellect to religion, not only does not advance us towards the truth, that is to say, towards life, but it tends to draw us further and further from it. Let us return to our principles: to be in the truth, is not to be spectators of the truth, but it is to live the life of Jesus Christ; and without suggesting here all the characteristics of that life, we limit ourselves to saying, that it is a life of self-control and humility. But knowledge dissipates and inflates; these are its natural effects; for it must be admitted, that we ought to call that dissipation, which estranges the soul from the true end of life, and that inflation or pride which gives to man an exaggerated idea of his power and independence. In this sense, we may comprehend how an individual the most serious and modest, in the eyes of the world, is proud and vain, in the eyes of the truth; for if he forgets not the end to which human wisdom ought to aspire, he wanders from that which divine wisdom prescribes. If he does not voluntarily raise himself above his fellow-men, he raises himself, with them, above the condition of humanity, and, we may say, to a level with God himself. But, I would ask, can anything be more contrary to the spirit of that Gospel which he has studied, and which he claims to understand? And will not a study which, destitute of a counterpoise, delivers man to that double tendency, a study every advance in which leads one just so far into pride and dissipation of mind, every day draw him further and further from the truth—in other words, further and further from life?

Habits of thought are not less tyrannical than others, and a time comes when return is impossible, even to the strongest will. Follow the moral history of a man abandoned to the tendency which we have indicated. Seriousness of spirit was no stranger to the first steps in his progress; it is scarcely possible that he regarded religion simply as a subject of philosophical speculation; his first design was doubtless to apply it to his heart, and submit to it his life. But that impression was superficial and fugitive; thought, powerfully excited, threw itself upon that rich prey, and turned it entirely to its own account. That inclination became dominant and tyrannical; everything which was intended as aliment for the soul, became food for the intellect. Each gain of the intellect was a loss to the soul, which, deprived of stimulus and condemned to inaction, lost its energy in idleness. That man, having acquired the habit of seizing everything on the intellectual side, gradually becomes incapable of seizing it under any other aspect. Strange! he becomes more and more capable of explaining the effects of truth upon the soul, less and less capable of feeling its power upon his own; he has spoken, he has written, perhaps, upon *the process of grace*, but his heart has grown more and more impenetrable to the influence of grace. In all his religious reflections, the idea of the thing has presented itself with the thing, nay has interposed itself between his mind and the fact; soon indeed he has seen nothing in these facts but phantoms, which faithfully exhibit their surface and outline, but contain no substance whatever. He has discovered the evil, and is troubled —he has finally tried to make of religion, so long his study, his personal affair; he endeavors to place himself under the action of truth, and in dependence upon it; but such is the force of habit, that at each attempt his intellect forces itself between his conscience and the object. Seeking in vain a religion in his system, he ever finds only a system in religion. In his anguish, he would willingly forget, willingly be ignorant; he envies the credulity of the simple and of children; he would give all his science for one of their sighs, all his intelligence for their heart—for his own has ceased to beat, it has become intellect. He wishes that Christianity were gone from his memory, that the very existence of religion should become unknown, in order that, presented to him a second time, it might act upon his heart, formed anew, with all the energy of a fresh fact, of an unexpected blessing. Vain wishes! the eye which is destroyed can never be restored—and never can we restore faith, which is the eye of the soul. Strange condition of mind, in which one believes everything, yet believes nothing; in which the faith of the intellect enables us to feel the necessity of the faith of the heart, causes us to mourn its absence, but cannot give it to the soul; a condition of light, but of light which has no other effect than to render darkness visible; ignorance in the midst of science, error in truth, unbelief in faith, a curse in the form of a blessing; situation, contradictory, insensate, in which we should reproach the divine power as a cruel mockery, if the evidence did not compel us to ascribe it to ourselves! God is not the author of any evil; he is the remedy of all evils; and the cure of what we have just described is not beyond his power, is not beyond his goodness.

Here, it seems to me, that I hear some one saying, but is it really nothing to know? Is not knowing the way to the truth? Is it not a part of the truth?

Doubtless it is; and were this the proper occasion, I should insist on the utility of that very knowledge, the insufficiency of which I have just exhibited; and for this very reason, that religion ought to be seized by the whole man. I should demand that the intellect should enter into it; and, considering the beautiful harmony of the evangelical system, its perfect consistency founded upon absolute and, by consequence, necessary truth, the accordance of that work of God with all the other works of the same hand, I would say, that if we wished to place man at the point of departure of all just ideas, on the way of all practical truths, it is good to make him embrace the Christian religion on the sides which interest his reason; a thing, perhaps, too much neglected, and which would form for the mass of society an instrument of mental development, not less than of moral culture.

But ideas of Christianity are not Christianity; it ought, however, to be well remarked here, that if from *Christianity*, *real* and living, we re-descend, almost without willing it, to the ideas of which its *system* is composed, so also these ideas remount as naturally to life, which is its essence. Yet once more we remark, these are only ideas, ideas, I avow, relative to moral facts, moral ideas, and which, as such, cannot be explained, but by some previous intervention of the moral being, but which, nevertheless, do not necessarily move that last fountain of the soul, from which springs true life. In studying the phenomena of interior existence, one is almost tempted to admit in man two concentric souls, of which the most exterior is only the counterproof or the reflection of the other; a superficial soul that remains a stranger to obligation, obedience, and will, but which conceives of all these, which receives the communications of the true soul, possesses its secret, speaks its language, and, on the ground of that mutual understanding, gives and takes itself for a soul—although it is only the dim reflection of the soul in the understanding. Whatever may be the nature of that faculty, and the secret of its relations to life, we do not see in it the true seat of religious truth; even though capable of admiring and painting the truth, it is not in a situation to experience and realize it. This second soul, doubtless, could not exist in the absence of the first; moral ideas suppose in him who perceives them a moral nature, and one has some difficulty in conceiving why every idea does not bring along with it its corresponding sentiment; but innumerable facts exist to prove that these ideas, however moral they may be, are nothing but ideas, that they belong only to the domain of the intellect, and that it is not in them we must seek for the source of life. Life belongs to that portion of our nature which obeys, which hopes and loves.

I have spoken first of *obeying*, because the sentiment of obligation, the *conscience*, is the root of all morality. I have spoken of it first, because separation between God and man, having here for its principle the disobedience of man, the return of man to God or religion must commence by obedience; religion, which names nothing else as its end, speaks of nothing else as its beginning. Conscience produces fear; fear dissipated by the free offer of salvation, gives place to joy; joy opens the heart to love; and love is life, love itself is salvation; obedience, which ought to be the reason of our happiness, is become its effect and consequence. Such is the genealogy of evangelical sentiments and dispositions; it shows us in what spirit we ought to receive the Gospel, and how we ought to appropriate it. It is with intellect and conscience together that we ought to read it.

What can be more reasonable; what more conformed to the nature of the Gospel, and the design which God has in view in giving it? His design is to provide a remedy for the soul, a rule for the will. The Gospel, like all other facts, may furnish matter for a science; but, before being a science, it is a fact, it is an action of God. That action, it is more important to submit to, than to explain. When a father confers a benefit upon his children, or when in the exercise of his paternal functions, he takes some step on their account, their duty, doubtless, is not to analyze psychologically the principles which cause him to act so, or the consistency of the means which he employs to accomplish his aim, but to receive it, and to feel it. A plant—supposing it endowed with reason—would not be fertilized by the knowledge which it might have of the origin of the effects of the rain, but by the rain itself. Before investigating the effects of grace, which is the rain from heaven, and which falls not in all places, man ought to run towards it, and steep himself in its influence. Then only will the withered branches revive, and be covered with fruits.

Then refreshed, fertilized, living, he may investigate, if he pleases; and thus, doubtless, he will do with humility, with reverence, and in order to render honor to the source of life. His thought, impregnated with a balsam which prevents all corruption, will communicate grace with science. Then will fall to the ground, with the approbation of St. Paul himself, that word of his, "Science puffeth up, charity buildeth up," because science itself has become charity. Then will St. Paul no longer say of you, that you are always learning, without coming to the knowledge of the truth, because you have known, so to speak, before learning; the great truth was in your heart, before the particular truths of speculation entered your intellect. Then these truths themselves will become living parts of "the truth;" your theology of a piece with the other, will be a religion; your science entirely Christian; your light, heat; your sun, a true sun. In making such use of your intellect as will honor you among the thinking, you will provoke no one to the idolatry of intellect; your reason will suffice to point out the limits and insufficiency of reason; as the bow holds the arrow, each of your thoughts will hold a sentiment; at once instructed and edified by you, all will rejoice so fully to comprehend what they love, and to love what they comprehend, and will bless Him who, in sending from heaven peace to our troubled hearts, has sent peace equally to our intellect.

But all this will not be your work; but the work of Him, whose grace addressed equally to intellect and heart, has shed upon them by turn light in the heat, and heat in the light. To him then I feel myself compelled to appeal, at the close of this abstract discussion, composed of the very speculations whose abuse I have condemned. No one, I hope, will have occasion to accuse me of inconsistency. In this case, all Christian preachers would have to be accused, who in presenting to you ideas (for they have nothing at their disposal but the ideas of things) extend their wishes, in your behalf, further than their power will go. The danger which I have, to-day, pointed out, I have met in this very discourse. I have need then to pray God to moisten this arid soil, to vivify these reasonings, to realize these ideas; to cause your heart to respond to each of the words which I have addressed to your intellects. I raise to Him from the bosom of my infirmity, that prayer which will change it into power. If you pray yourselves, my desire will be accomplished in advance; for one prays not with the intellect, but with the heart. May we, at the close of these speculations, find ourselves fortified in our aversion to sterile speculations; be led to examine ourselves whether we have the truth in us, or only its form, whether we merely know or whether we live! Whatever be the extent of our knowledge or the reach of our intellect, may we all have it in our power, with joy and gratitude, to appropriate these words of our Saviour: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes!" O blessed childhood; true maturity of the heart, true perfection of man, immutable age of the faithful on earth, eternal age of the blessed and of angels, mayst thou be given to all of us with thy simplicity, thy candor, and thy faith!

THE CENTRE OF MORAL GRAVITATION.

OCCASIONED BY THE "PHILOSOPHICAL MISCELLANIES" OF M. JOUFFROY.

(FROM "ESSAIS DE PHILOSOPHIE MORALE.")

THE two most remarkable pieces of this collection are those which have for their title "The Actual Condition of Humanity."* The first only has been known to us. When it appeared in the *Globe*, in 1826, we recollect how vividly it excited our curiosity, with reference to the second article, which it led us to expect, but which did not appear. The author in the first part of his task, proposed to show the extreme probability, or rather philosophical necessity of the triumph of Christian civilization, which, in his view, must gradually absorb all other civilizations. First ascending to the cause of the difference which separates civilized from savage communities, M. Jouffroy found it to consist in the different degrees of precision, with which the question of religion was solved in these respective communities. Thus the author indicated, on his way, a great truth, which was noticed, perhaps, only, by a small number of his readers: namely, that man is a religious animal; that is to say, that he is irresistibly impelled to subordinate every question to that of religion; that, by an instinct, he finds all things good or bad, useful or injurious, according to their conformity or opposition to the law, which places in time the conditions of eternity; that society cannot organize itself with security or hope except around some "Word of God;" that the law can be nothing less than the will of God applied to social action; in a word, that society itself, as well as the individual, is created in the manner and with the means appropriate to it, to perform the service of God. According to which, it is easy to comprehend, says our author, that as the solution of the religious question shall be more precise, (and we add, *more true*,) the more will society find itself in harmony with the designs of God, the fulfilment of which constitutes the order and beauty of the universe, the happiness of sensitive and intelligent beings. To the different degrees of religious truth must correspond with exactness, the different degrees of civilization, from the condition absolutely savage, which is only the lowest term of a continued gradation, to the highest social perfection attainable by man. The comparison of civilized nations with each other will present results perfectly analogous. The relative truth of the religious system will determine the superiority of the social system, while in its turn, the superiority of the social system and its capacity for extension, its conquering force, will bear testimony to the truth of the religious doctrines upon which it is based. But, the author, after having proved that "missionaries cannot act upon communities already civilized except by the superiority of the truth of the Christian system, that this superiority of truth is also a superiority of power, and confers superiority of attraction; after having announced that he had sought to ascertain, both by history and *investigation*, which of the systems is the truest," has, nevertheless, not attempted to prove except by results the superiority of the truth which he ascribes to Christianity. His second article, very fine in other respects, and which would not have disappointed us, had not our attention been directed elsewhere, presents the development of very different ideas. Disappointed! but why disappointed? After all, we have not been disappointed. In studying, with some care, this second article, we have found, if not the results that we sought, at least principles which involve or necessitate it. We proceed to explain ourselves.

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* For a brief account of M. Jouffroy, and the pieces referred to, see Note at the end of this Essay.

After comparing civilized with savage nations, and then civilized nations with each other, he ends by placing himself at the centre of Christian civilization, and traces a parallel between the three European nations which, in his view, are the representatives of the different forms, and depositaries of the different forces of that civilization. He shows what the system they represent would gain by their union becoming more and more intimate; he discovers what each of them would itself gain by this means, and endeavors to prove that to labor truly for the welfare of one nation, it must be done with reference to humanity as a whole; for by virtue of that most admirable law, in the widest as well as in the narrowest sphere, the interest of all is identical with the interest of each.

Here we cannot withhold the remark that the inverse maxim lies at the basis of the systems which, in the present day, tend to predominate. It seems to be admitted, in fact, that the interest of each is identical and harmonious with the interest of all, and that the first conducts to the second, as the second to the first. In an abstract point of view this is true, so that without inconvenience the terms of the proposition may be reversed. If this identity exists (and how doubt it without denying God, enthroning chance, rejecting evidence?) it ought to be a matter of indifference, but always in an abstract sense, whether we begin at the one term or at the other. It is not, however, in an abstract but in a concrete sense that the individual acts, that is to say, in the sense of a given individuality, which is his own, and which is composed in part of an instinct of justice and sympathy, and in part of passions which struggle in opposition, and constitute the different forms of a greedy, all-grasping, all-devouring egoism.* Thence the identity exists no longer, the harmony is broken; and it is easy to conceive how, if a single egoism disturbs order, a thousand egoisms in conflict not only with society but with themselves, will disturb it yet more, and so far from social good being the result, nothing but social evil can spring from their combined development. But social evil, in particular, can be nothing else than the evil of individuals, so that, by an inevitable repercussion, the misery of society falls back upon each of its authors.

But a nation can be nothing more than an individual, when serving as a rule to itself. A nation is an individual, passionate, egoistical, unjust, which, in taking its interest for its only rule, compromises as well the interests of humanity as its own. Reason ought to cause nations to ascend to humanity, as individuals to nations; for the task given us is always to ascend to that which is found to be an interest which can never become egoistical, (selfish,) and which on this ground becomes the summit and source of all other interests. This interest can be nothing but humanity. But two things may be understood by *humanity:* the mass of men which inhabit our globe, or the combination of the qualities which constitute the nature of man. In the first sense, the providential law already finds its application, for facts prove that the evil of one nation can never be the good of others, nor its good their evil. But these facts lead only to a very imperfect realization of the law; whether it be that the practical consequence which we derive from it is of a negative character, and resolves itself into reciprocal offices of a prudential kind, or whether humanity in the first sense is really beyond the reach of individuals, and even of nations. It is in the second sense, then, that humanity can serve as an object to our efforts; we are called to promote, each in his sphere, the interests of the human element, and to elevate ourselves from patriotism to humanity. But what is the human element? and consequently, what is humanity (*humanisme*)? Is there in reality a human element? When you have detached from the notion of man that of child, father, husband, citizen, the particular, the public man, what remains to the pure notion of man? An indifferent substance, the primal and neutral matter of all our relations—a mere image of faculties and organs—which is not dumb, however, and which once drew from a people whose nationality had made it ferocious, a cry of enthusiasm, at the utterance of that fine sentiment: *Homo sum, et nihil humani a me alienum puto,* but which did not prevent that people, which will never prevent any people, making their national existence a perpetual blasphemy against humanity. We repeat it, a substantial reality is wanting to the mere notion of man. All the particular attributes with which the life of man can be invested, suppose a relation ; man, as man alone, has it not ; and the notion of humanity vanishes from our hands the moment we imagine we have grasped it. If, then, there is nothing by which, in some way, it may substantiate itself, do not retain man suspended in the void, but let him fall back towards the various relations which we have just named, at the risk of seeing him make of each of these relations a basis of an egoism. We must abandon our attempt to find in the idea of humanity that last step* from which a relation may embrace and control all others, that unity where all interests, co-ordinated like a pyramid, become, at their apex, one indivisible interest. But we shall not be disappointed in this respect. if we find for man a relation not parallel but superior to all which are formed on earth, that is, if we make it terminate with God, by means of the most elevated parts of our being. Then *man* finding a relation finds a reality ; then the pure notion of man has a substance ; then man, so far as he is man, is a reality ; then he has a human interest, which is determined by the relation of man to God ; then have we found a centre for all our interests, a summit to the pyramid of human relations, a point whence his entire moral life may issue and expand. It were impossible for us to feel ourselves under an absolute obligation to humanity, a mere abstract being from whom we receive nothing. But we are under obligation, in a manner the most absolute, to God, who is our origin and our end. There our egoism expires, there we cease to belong to ourselves; there we are at the disposal of God, and of all the objects which he indicates to our devotion. Eternal interest, the interest of God, if I may thus express myself, is alone large enough to hold all other interests in free and generous play. Whatever is right finds its place in the service of God; for whatever is right is God himself; egoism (selfishness) alone, individual or rational, can find no place there, for egoism is the antagonism of that pure devotion, that disinterested love which we owe to God. No interest can be cultivated at the expense of another, for God, who is the *good* of all, cannot contain in himself the evil of any. God is then the social principle *par excellence*, which we were to seek after by ascending higher and higher.

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* Selfishness.

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* *Echelon*, round of the ladder or pyramid.

But the mere idea of God, an idea exposed among men to so many corruptions, is not sufficient to secure our devotion to him. God must discover himself to us, in an authentic form, and with a character fitted to inspire disinterested affection.

It is in this last feature that M. Jouffroy will discover the superiority of the truth which he has foreseen in Christianity; he will find here more than he sought—*auctius et melius*. For in a moral and social point of view, and according to the principles he has himself laid down, he must acknowledge that Christianity has absolute truth. If religion, in order to be social, ought to teach and to inspire pure benevolence, what religion in this respect can compare with Christianity, which for the sake of teaching man to devote himself to God, has first devoted God to man? I ask the author whether, in reasoning consistently upon the principles he has chosen, he is not irresistibly bound to recognize Christianity as true? What other doctrine can be more, or do more? Can you conceive of one which could show us more than God incarnate, GOD UPON THE CROSS?*

It is in this way that M. Jouffroy, perhaps, might have demonstrated the absolute truth of Christianity, if he had given himself to the investigation which his first article seemed to promise; and we repeat it, we cannot see how he could logically arrive at any other conclusion. For ourselves, the positions of the second article on the true social theory, which places society at the centre, and the individual at the circumference, has made the Christian solution an inevitable necessity. From whatever point we start, provided we advance in good faith, we must terminate in the great evangelical synthesis.†

Taken in itself, the second article of M. Jouffroy is a beautiful and noble composition, fruitful of consequences. We have ascended, at once, to the principle which governs the theory of the author, and which explains and justifies it; let us now change the route, and, forgetting the heights to which that theory attaches itself, let us inquire only to what consequences it leads.

In the manner of Copernicus, the author has removed the individual from the centre, where he illumines nothing, directs nothing, does nothing—towards the circumference, where he must gravitate. Humanity now occupies the centre ; humanity, I say, represented in each country by a particular society which must serve for humanity. Divisions into families and nations represent only grand divisions of labor, in a sublime spirit and aim. If this be so, then many changes will follow, for whoever serves must command, and whoever commands must serve. Society is no longer the instrument of the individual, but the individual is the instrument of society. Society no longer exists for man, but man for society. It will however be asked, is all this new ; is it not what we have a thousand times anticipated ? We reply : this has been said sometimes, by a sort of contradiction ; for example, among the ancient republics, where the individual, by uniting his egoism with thousands of others, and transferring his own personality to the personality of the nation, has attached the greatest part of his personal interest and happiness to the triumphs, however unjust, of the association of which he formed a part ; so that the patriotism of Athens and Rome was a mere bargain in which the soul gave its share of individual welfare for a share in the national glory and prosperity. And this is only saying that, in the great majority of cases, they were without disinterestedness ; for sacrifices were required only as an equitable bounty for benefits rendered by society, as a moral tax, without which society could not meet the public expense. The same thing is still said, in our day, with little intelligence, when the masses are invited to devote *themselves* in the name of *themselves*, that is, in the name of *nothing*, without the principle of love, and with no relation to anything but themselves, always rushing onward, but never rising upward. Christianity alone thoroughly comprehends what it says, when it commands devotion (self-consecration,) it alone knows disinterested love; in the first place, because such pure devotion is doctrinally at its basis, and secondly, because, by giving the full assurance of happiness, and in that assurance itself the very happiness which it secures, by bestowing the recompense before the devotion, the salary before the labor, it puts the soul in a condition to devote itself without reserve, without hope, and without pledge; makes of devotion the recompense of devotion, of sacrifice a part of the happiness it confers.*

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* If Jesus Christ is "God manifest in the flesh," there can be no error, no extravagance in representing God upon the cross. Whatever of mystery may be involved in this, it discovers to us the disinterested and amazing love of God.—T.

† That is, the Gospel, by reuniting man to God, alone makes religion and morality, including disinterested love, purity and virtue, possible. That unites all extremes, reconciles all contradictions, mental, moral, and social. That first binds men to God, and then binds men to one another. A sublime "Christian synthesis" indeed!—T.

The doctrine of M. Jouffroy, who makes humanity the end and aim of individuals and nations, is thus new, if taken beyond the limits of Christian inspirations; and when he complains that it is not made the basis of politics, and the guide of political men, he but complains, to say the truth, that political men are not Christians! When governments shall be Christian, then we shall see them laboring in the direction of the general interests of humanity. But if you could succeed, even now, in convincing them by facts, that the interest of their communities engages them to labor thus, it would be no more in their power to do so, than it is in the power of a selfish individual to regulate all his conduct with reference to the interests of his fellow-men, when he is assured beforehand that they will end, by taking from him all the profit. Love alone teaches devotion; and we are satisfied that general interests must be poorly guaranteed by the calculations of individual selfishness.

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* God gives himself, first of all, for man and to man. The instant, therefore, man believes, he is forgiven and saved. He is fully justified, and put in possession of eternal life. All that he has to do is to consecrate himself to God and to duty. By losing himself, he finds God, and in finding God, once more finds himself, nay, finds everything. "All is yours." Thus devotion, or sacrifice itself, is our highest interest and felicity.

And what is admirable, in this theory realized, particular interests would be better secured the less they were thought of! The social welfare comprehends all other welfare, the human interests all other interests. In an order of things founded upon this principle, it would come to pass that little would be said of rights, much of duties; nevertheless no right would suffer. Liberty would then be cultivated in connection with the entire social interest, and under the influence of religious principle. Society would be restored to its primitive integrity; it would permit no one to be a slave: liberty, in its view, would be a force and a dignity, of which it would not suffer itself to be despoiled in the person of any of its members. A social state, founded upon the principle of *disinterestedness*, could not be other than free and happy.

To the idea of liberty would attach itself (a thing equally new!) the idea of peace. Till the present time this has never been so. In too many cases, liberty is compelled to be nothing but an *egoism*, which defends itself or attacks others. Its character, altogether negative, puts it out of its power to create anything, to bind anything together. Not being love, it is nothing. Jealousy and hostility superabound in the political movements which pass under our eyes; defiance is the avowed principle of modern constitutions.* With such elements as these, what can be constituted which is either solid or vital? They dissolve, they do not unite. A true *society* must have confidence for its basis, which is in the human sphere, what faith is in the religious sphere. And it is impossible that such confidence should establish itself, and control all the energies of society, till society has been wholly plunged in the waters of a new baptism. In a word, before society can be taught devotion, it must be Christian. Each person, in view of the incessant agitations of modern society, asks, when will they cease; each longs to assign them some limit; but no one sees distinctly any reason why such agitation should end. Political unrest in the elements which diffuse a general distrust, is "the worm that never dies, the fire that is never quenched;" for when will selfishness find repose? There is no hope, except in the intervention of a harmonizing synthesis, to speak the language of the new doctrines. This is felt. After all, to what good does it come, in this the nineteenth century, and in crowded Paris, in quest of new religions?* It is absurd, doubtless, to think of making one. It would be like giving oneself an alms out of his own purse. It is absurd, we say, to think of making one, but it is infinitely reasonable to look for one. Has this symptom of our times been sufficiently studied?

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* No one needs to be told how this has been verified in the recent history of political movements in modern Continental Europe.

What yet remains to us of the ancient faith, keeps together crumbling societies. The Christian impulse has perpetuated itself among doctrines which contradict it. The Christian spirit still appears in many works of modern philosophy. It perpetuates, without avowing it, evangelical charity. At the same time, responding to the cry of human want, Christianity everywhere reappears, fresh and beautiful, like the green earth, after a long winter. The thirst for the "glad tidings" is felt among those who do not know that there are "glad tidings."* The Christianity of the apostles and martyrs, not of philosophers and free-thinkers, the Christianity which Huss preached four centuries ago, and the apostle Paul eighteen centuries ago, rises again from the catacombs of oblivion, and, ancient as it is, it appears, young and fresh, among the antiquities of yesterday and the day before. It stands prepared, at the close of a combat which perhaps may be long, to receive into its arms society, mangled and bleeding. The whole world joins itself to the one half of our question; for the whole world feels that aid is needed. Ask the philosophers; they acknowledge that it is necessary, at any risk, to issue from negations, and enter the sphere of affirmative truths, as alone fruitful. But where are they, except in Christianity? We say, then, in the name of society, to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Our Father, who art in heaven, thy kingdom come!" May the author of the *Philosophical Miscellanies* offer the same prayer!

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* In France, formalism, deism, scepticism, atheism, St. Simonism, Fourierism, sentimentalism, pan-religionism, which is simply pan-naturalism, and a thousand other *isms*, follow thick and fast at each other's heels. Strange that the "*wise men*" of that infatuated country never seem to think of returning to pure Christianity.—T.

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* *Socialism*, which pervades France and even Germany, is one of the most striking facts of modern times. Preposterous perhaps, as a system, it yet embodies one grand element of truth. It is the instinct and longing of the soul for unity, fraternity, and repose. This is its vitality and power. This accounts for its existence and will perpetuate it, in spite of oppression and contempt. Christianity alone understands this instinct. The gospel alone fairly meets and satisfies its demands.—T.

NOTICE OF JOUFFROY.

BY THE TRANSLATOR.

M. Theodore Jouffroy, one of the most able and eloquent of the French philosophers of the eclectic school, was born in 1796, and studied under Cousin, who regarded him with affection and admiration, as one of his most promising pupils. Soon after the completion of his studies, he was appointed professor of Moral Philosophy in the faculty of Literature, in which situation he continued till his death, which occurred a few years ago. He bestowed much attention upon the Scottish philosophy, and gave to the French public an admirable translation of Dugald Stewart's "Moral Philosophy," to which he prefixed an acute and elegant essay, on the study of intellectual philosophy. Less bold and hazardous than some of the French and German contemporary philosophers, and leaning to the Scottish method, which is simply the method of induction applied to the facts of consciousness, Jouffroy protests, with great earnestness, against too rapid generalizations, and mere theories, in the domain of philosophy. He is no materialist, but clearly and beautifully develops the great facts of our spiritual and moral nature. Inferior, it may be, to Cousin, in the grasp of his mind, or the splendor of his style, he equals that able, but somewhat extravagant thinker, in the acuteness of his analysis, and in the beauty, clearness, and precision of his language. His attention, however, was directed chiefly to moral philosophy. His views on the nature and destiny of man, are grand and thrilling. These are developed, to some extent, in his "Mélanges Philosophiques," several of which have been well translated by Mr. George Ripley.* In his view, the fundamental question in ethics is, "Whether there be such a thing as good, and such a thing as evil." Having decided this question in the affirmative, by reference to the entire history of man, and the clearest facts of consciousness, he proceeds to show, by an elaborate induction, that good and evil have reference to the destiny of the individual and of the race; that good is what promotes, evil what hinders the fulfilment of our destiny. On this ground he proves, that the great problem of human destiny lies at the foundation of all morality. What is man? Whence comes he, and whither goes he? He has wants; evil presses upon him; he has many doubts and fears; great and thrilling questions, pertaining to his past and his future, press upon his attention. What is the individual man? What is the race? What is its origin? What its end? Why does it suffer? Why does it sin?† Can it be restored to purity and happiness? In a word, what is its destiny?

These questions, poetry, religion, and philosophy endeavor to solve. They have done so with more or less success. The solution given by the Christian religion seems to M. Jouffroy satisfactory, if we do not misunderstand him; but the solution, in this instance, is simply practical, not scientific or philosophical, but clothed in poetical and symbolic forms. Philosophy must still investigate and verify, on fundamental grounds, the principles of religion. How far M. Jouffroy concedes the inspiration and authority of the Christian religion, it may be difficult to say. He uniformly speaks of it with respect, and certainly vindicates its claims to high consideration, by his speculations on the Christian form of civilization. We fear, however, that he did not regard it as containing absolute, authoritative, and infallible truth. This he sought in the sphere of speculative philosophy. Did he find it there? What light has he thrown on the origin and destiny of man? How does he account for sin; how propose to remove it? In a word, does he solve philosophically the sublime problems he has himself raised? Every candid reader must say that he does not. Upon some points of inquiry, touching the true method of philosophical study, the nature of moral distinctions, and the history of the race, the tendencies of the various forms of civilization, the rights and interests of individuals and of nations, he sheds some clear light; but as to the *solution* of the grand and difficult problems referred to, he has left them very much where he found them. Is sin accounted for, by referring it to ignorance, or inexperience, or example? Can man, either as a race or as an individual, be restored to purity and happiness, by ceasing to think of himself, in other words, by abandoning his egoism, and living for man as man, for the nation, for the world? Nay, can man be induced, by any means short of a divine regeneration, to become disinterested and self-sacrificing? Can you transform him, by an abstraction which you call humanity, or the race? Can a corrupted individual, or a corrupted society, like France, for example, amid the convulsions of revolution, secure liberty, equality, fraternity, by simply willing it, above all by fighting for it? The truth is, the great body of the French and German philosophers, as events demonstrate, have not yet taken the first step in the solution of the problem of human renovation; and the reason is to be found in the fact, that they have either rejected Christianity, or subjected it to the control of speculative theories.

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* Most of the Miscellanies first appeared in *the Globe*, a philosophical Journal published in Paris.

† M. Jouffroy does not use the word *sin*, but he must certainly mean it when he speaks of moral evil. But sin is a very expressive word of which the philosophers seem to be somewhat afraid.

M. Jouffroy's principles, however, as shown by Vinet, logically carried out, resolve themselves into the Christian solution, which gives to man a God—not a God abstract or metaphysical, but real, vital, warm; and not merely a God, but a Father, a friend, a redeemer, whose love, "shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost," produces a corresponding love, and thus renovates and saves him. Thence flows true and disinterested virtue, love to God and love to man, that "charity divine" which "believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things," and, we may add, "doeth all things." God himself has taught the august, though simple lesson of "overcoming evil with good," of living for Him, for ourselves, for one another, for the world; and thus the problem of human destiny is solved, and solved for all time to come.

As logically necessitating such a result, M. Jouffroy's disquisitions on the "Actual Condition of Humanity," possess a peculiar interest. In the first, he shows, that there are "three systems of civilization, which have founded three great families which divide the globe; and that these three systems of civilization are, in other words, three different religions or philosophies, the Christian, the Mohammedan, and the Braminic."

He adds, "We ought not to be surprised at this. A real religion is nothing but a complete solution of the great questions which interest humanity, that is to say, of the destiny of man, of his origin, of his future condition, of his relations to God and his fellow-men. Now, it is by virtue of the opinions which different nations profess on these questions, that they establish a mode of worship, a government, and laws, that they adopt certain manners, habits, and thoughts, that they aspire to a certain order of things, which they regard as the ideal of the true, the beautiful, the right, and the good, in this world."*

Hence every religion necessitates and involves a certain political organization, a certain mode of social life, and a certain moral or attractive force.

Thus Mohammedanism, Braminism, and Christianity, are clearly distinguished, and give rise to different specific results, visible wherever they exist and have full scope. Varieties obtain in these several spheres, but they have certain grand characteristic features by which they are distinguished.

"The true and radical difference between savages and civilized nations, consists in the fact, that the former have only crude and vague ideas on the great questions which interest humanity. Hence savages, all over the world, are devoted to Fetichism in religion, that is to say, they have not yet discovered the idea of that of which they have the feeling, but not the conception." This accounts for their weakness, politically and socially, and necessitates the fact, everywhere occurring, that they are destined to absorption into the stronger civilizations.

The world, then, is subject to three different forces, or three systems of civilization—Christianity, Braminism, and Mohammedanism. The savage race is every day diminishing; one or all of the other races everywhere—in Asia, Africa, and America, by conversion, by conquest, by general superiority of character and force, must overrun them, take their place, or draw them into their ranks.

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* Ripley's Translation.

But of the three forms of civilization dominant in the world, Christianity alone is vital, active, aggressive. It is the only one which makes any progress at the expense of the others. The other two, once active and powerful, have exhausted their energy. They are stationary, make no progress, gain no converts, achieve no conquests. Neither Braminism nor Mohammedanism forms colonies, gains anything by science, by religion, or the arts. Indeed, they are losing, by these very means, every day. They exist by sufferance; a few powerful strokes from the stronger civilization would dash them to pieces. They gain nothing upon savage nations. All these are falling, under the power of the Christian civilization. On no side do they penetrate into the Christian civilization; that, however, everywhere penetrates into them, and plants the Bible, Christianity, civil institutions, arts and sciences, in their very centre. "Christianity and its civilization everywhere advance, with ardor and with deliberate purpose, into the domains of Brama and Mohammed."

The superiority of power, then, mental, moral, social, scientific, and physical, belongs to Christianity. Thus it advances, in every possible way, and must, eventually, plant itself on the high places of the world, and take possession of the nations.

Christianity itself is pure, but penetrating the life of man and the life of the nations, as a social power, it gives energy and impulse to all that is strongest in man; and as good and evil are mixed in the history and experience of the race, the evil is evolved with the good. But the good, by the blessing of Heaven, is destined to predominate; and although revolutions and conquests are to be dreaded in themselves, they prepare the way for the triumph of the Christian civilization.

In the second disquisition, or rather the second part of his disquisition, on the "Actual Condition of Humanity," M. Jouffroy recapitulates the principles established in the first, and proceeds to consider France, England and Germany, including the United States, as the three great representatives of Christian civilization—"the only ones which invent," which are "truly enlightened," which make progress in science, in the arts, in industry, in the accumulation of wealth, in Christian proselytism and in conquest. Of course Russia, though behind them, in civilization, is not left out of the account. For her progress, such as it is, is quite considerable, and based in its last analysis, upon the Christian idea. He shows that each of these has its peculiar sphere and destiny, and that their true interest, as well as the welfare of the world, demand their union and co-operation.

Hence he infers that the most momentous question which philosophy can propose is that of the future condition of our civilization. He then complains of the neglect of this great problem by statesmen and rulers, shows, with a deep and stirring eloquence, that the end of man is not animal but moral; and that it becomes all to arouse themselves, and labor, not for narrow, local, or selfish ends, but for the good of the whole, for mankind, for the world. "We confess," says he in closing, "it is particularly as philosophers that we have been led to the examination of this great problem. Persuaded of the truth of the conjectures on the prospects of Christian civilization, which have been suggested by a view of the world, beholding in the destiny of this civilization that of the human race, this interest predominates in our mind, over all others; so much the more, as, so far from excluding, it embraces and comprehends them. We have also been led to this inquiry by another interest, which belongs more especially to our philosophical studies. It is the wish to call forth a philosophy of history on a broader scale, than has yet appeared among us. It seems to us, that hitherto, we have given our attention too exclusively to nations, and not enough to humanity, too much to institutions, religions, and manners, and not enough to the development of the human mind, which is the secret principle of manners, religions, and institutions. The former method has concealed the progress of civilization itself, of which only isolated fragments are found in the civilization of each nation. For the civilization of one nation is not civilization; civilization itself is the succession of different degrees of civilization; and in order to comprehend its progress, we must understand the origin, the connection and the development of these different degrees. The second method has left in the shade the very principle of civilization, which is something more profound than institutions, than all external facts; for all things of this kind die and succeed each other, while civilization never dies. This principle which we have illustrated connects together all institutions, all religions, all diversities of manners, all forms of humanity, and reduces them to being mere events in history. This essentially simplifies the history of humanity, and gives it a physiognomy, a unity, and a charm altogether new."*

It is a matter of regret, that M. Jouffroy did not direct his attention to the fact of the great diversities of character, power, and progress among the different nations, which are included in the Christian civilization, and that he did not give the rationale of the vast superiority of the protestant element.† None can deny that the Anglo-Saxon race, including the free protestant communities, are gradually gaining upon the others in stability, freedom, and attractive force, and that the high probability now is that they are yet to control the world. They now possess and control, with slight exceptions, the whole western hemisphere. They occupy the centre of the eastern, and wield the greatest commercial and social influence in Europe.

Above all, how mournful the fact, that Jouffroy actually stops short at the very threshold of his own mighty problem. For the question yet recurs, if Christianity be the strongest power in the world, what is its fundamental principle? Is it divine, is it capable of universal and permanent application? In a word, is it life to the individual, is it life to the race? If it be such, then is it true, infallibly and eternally true. For the solution, which Jouffroy left untouched, we refer our readers to Vinet's brief but suggestive essay.

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* Ripley's Translation.

† As a Frenchman, perhaps this was impossible. The national vanity of nearly all French writers, inordinate even in Cousin and other philosophic thinkers, blinds them to the real character of their countrymen, the defects of which are obvious to the world.

THE RELIGIONS OF MAN AND THE RELIGION OF GOD.

"Things which have not entered into the heart of man."—1 Cor. ii. 9.

Man has separated himself from God. The storms of passion have broken the mysterious cable which held the vessel in port. Shaken to its base, and feeling itself driven upon unknown seas, it seeks to rebind itself to the shore; it endeavors to renew its broken strands; it makes a desperate effort to re-establish those connections, without which it can have neither peace nor security. In the midst of his greatest wanderings, man never loses the idea of his origin and destiny; a dim recollection of his ancient harmony pursues and agitates him; and without renouncing his passions, without ceasing to love sin, he longs to re-attach his being, full of darkness and misery, to something luminous and peaceful, his fleeting life to something immovable and eternal. In a word, God has never ceased to be the want of the human race. Alas! their homage wanders from its proper object, their worship becomes depraved, their piety itself is impious; the religions which cover the earth are an insult to the unknown God, who is their object. But in the midst of these monstrous aberrations, a sublime instinct is revealed; and each of these false religions is a painful cry of the soul, torn from its centre and separated from its object. It is a despoiled existence, which, in seeking to clothe itself, seizes upon the first rags it finds; it is a disordered spirit, which, in the ardor of its thirst, plunges, all panting, into fetid and troubled waters; it is an exile, who, in seeking the road to his native land, buries himself in frightful deserts.

From the brutal savage, who kisses the dust from the feet of some hideous idol, to the magi of the East, adoring in the sun the immortal soul of nature, and the principle of all existence, from the primitive people who offer to him the first fruits of their harvests, to those unhappy nations who think to render him homage by the most shameful excesses, the religious principle everywhere makes itself known. Man cannot renounce either his sins or God; his corruption chains him to this world, a mysterious instinct impels him towards that which is invisible. Between these two opposing forces he makes no choice; he attempts to reconcile two incompatible elements; he mingles his morals with his devotion; he makes gods resembling himself, in order to offer them a worship analogous to his own evil thoughts; he erects even his vices into divinities; his religion becomes the faithful mirror of his natural corruption; in a word, he degrades the idea of the Divinity, but he cannot do without it; and he prefers infamous gods rather than adore nothing.

But what do all these different religions procure for him? Nothing but a torment added to all his other torments; a painful, humiliating subjection; frequently the necessity to do violence to the most cherished feelings of his nature; no solid hope; no internal repose;

no moral perfection ; such is the value of that mysterious instinct, a species of importunate craving which he can neither stifle nor satisfy. So that he who looks upon religion in the various terrestrial forms with which it has clothed itself, might say, with an appearance of reason, that it is one of the greatest evils which nature has inflicted on humanity.

These fabulous creeds, it is true, disappear before Christianity ; for the least effect of that august religion, is to produce a disgust with all others. No new worship will establish itself on the earth ; the field of invention in the matter of positive religions is irrevocably enclosed. But in the shadow of Christianity, and in the very bosom of the church itself, there flourish certain religions, without a history, without form and name, which, to many persons, take the place of Christianity. These religions, which owe more to it than their votaries imagine, are nothing more than an effort of the different faculties of the soul, of their own accord, to put themselves in communication with the Deity. It is the imagination, the sentiment, the reason and the conscience, seeking together, or each by itself, to satisfy the longing they have for God. And it is worthy of remark, that these different religions are particularly those of cultivated minds, who wish to find a neutral ground between Christianity, which appears to them too simple and unintellectual, and atheism, by which they are appalled. But let us inquire if these religions are better fitted than gross paganism to satisfy the various wants of the human soul.

What, in reference to religion, are the wants of man? He is ignorant of divine things ; he needs a religion to enlighten him. He is unhappy from the evils of this life, and the uncertainty of his future destiny: he needs a religion to console him. In fine, he is a sinner; he needs a religion to regenerate him. Let us seek these various characteristics in the four religions of the *imagination*, the *intellect*, the *sentiment*, and the *conscience.*

To some, the Deity is revealed only in that which is fitted to strike the *imagination.* It is not the essence of the Being of beings, his moral character, or his will, which chiefly occupies their attention, but that part of his being by means of which he is rendered, in some measure, visible to our eyes. It is the universe, that is to say, time, space, forms, in which are reflected his eternity, his greatness, and his power. If the spectacles of nature in themselves are grand and sublime, how much are they elevated by the idea of that WORD which called from nothing all their magnificence; of that Intelligence which presides over all its mighty movements, which encloses as many wonders in the worm that dies under our feet, as in the formation and government of suns! What charm and what beauty are added to the splendor of the starry heavens, to the savage harmony of the raging seas, to the smiling landscape of fields and woods under the beams of the morning sun, by the thought of the universal Spirit which silently circulates through all beings, and which seems to reveal its immortal existence, and utter its voice divine, amid all the motions and all the sounds of the universe! So that, frequently, man, absorbed in the contemplation of these wonders, unites himself, by his enthusiasm, to the concert of the creation; his imagination feasts on the idea of God, and he believes himself to possess religion.

The imagination, the reason, the sensibility, the conscience, however, are four altars set up, between which the sacred flame is divided; but imagination is not the whole of man; it is not, by far, his best part. When the imagination has been excited in this way, is man any more like God? Is he more worthy of God? And not to go even so far, has he more of peace or consolation? No! the charm is evanescent; from those heights to which imagination raises him, man falls back upon himself, and finds not God there; and the august spectacles in which he has mingled, only make him feel the enormous disproportion between the universe so full of God, and his soul so void of God.

Others, in smaller number, seek to bring themselves into union with the Divinity by *intelligence*. To analyze the divine attributes, to harmonize them, to explain the connection of the Creator with the creation; in a word, to form, with reference to God and divine things, a body of systematic doctrine, is the task they impose upon themselves; and such labors, it must be confessed, are a noble exercise of thought. But a principal defect of this form of religion is, that it is less a religion than a study. Ordinarily the man who stops here seeks less to satisfy a want of his heart than a curiosity of his mind. Abstracted from himself, isolating himself from the things he contemplates, in order the better to contemplate them, application, practice, his personal relations to these high truths, occupy his attention but feebly; he acquires some additional ideas, but these ideas produce in him neither emotion nor change. And, indeed, how can he be changed by the things which always remain uncertain to his mind? The field of religious ideas, when it is trodden by the foot of natural reason, is only one of problems and contradictions. The farther one advances, the more his darkness increases;

and he ends by losing even those primary notions and instinctive beliefs which he possessed before he entered it. This is the experience of all the systems of all the schools in every age of the world. The history of philosophy teaches us that these investigations, whenever eagerly and incautiously pursued, lead to the most terrible doubts, to the very borders of the abyss. It is there, face to face with the infinite, the philosopher sees realities dissolve, certainties the most universal vanish, his own personality become a problem! There he sees world and thought, observation and observer, man and God, swallowed up and lost, before his terrified vision, in the boundless immensity of a horrible chaos! It is there that, seized with a mysterious dread, he asks back, with anxious emotion, the world of finite beings and intelligible ideas, which he wishes he had never abandoned. Thus his religion, all thought, neither enlightens, converts, nor consoles him; and he finds himself as far removed from his aim as before his laborious investigations.*

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* That speculative philosophy has been a fruitful source of scepticism and irreligion, no one at all acquainted with its history will deny. The class of philosophers of whom Benedict Spinoza and G. W. F. Hegel are fair representatives, have generally rejected the Christian faith, and not only so, but the existence of a personal God, and the immortality of the soul. Nor is this a matter of surprise; for they transcend the boundaries of all fair and legitimate inquiry. Contemning the slow and laborious investigation of facts and evidence, as empirical and shallow, and speculating fearlessly upon

> "Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,"

they lose themselves in the untried and desolate regions which lie beyond the limits of human inquiry. Now they seem to make everything matter; then they seem to make everything mind: anon they talk learnedly of "the whole," as if nature were God, and God nature, without any dis-

Feeling this, many persons reject these idle speculations and acknowledge no religion but that of *sentiment.* This, they say, is good ; and certainly, all religion that proceeds not from the heart is sterile and vain. Let us, however, examine. We are speaking of a religion of sentiment. Without doubt this sentiment is love, and a love which has God for its object : in which case it must be acknowledged that the best kind of religion is also the rarest, or that the love spoken of is a feeling

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tinction, except that which exists between the absolute and relative, the real and phenomenal. Occasionally they appear to admit the existence of an independent and personal God, at other times to deny it altogether. They spurn the common, and especially the Christian notion of a supreme Jehovah, distinct from and superior to all the works of the creation, and adopting a profounder strain, represent the Deity as the eternal movement of the universal principle, " the ever-streaming immanence of spirit in matter, which constantly manifests itself in individual existences, and which has no true objective (real) existence but in these individuals, which pass away again into the infinite." These are the sentiments of Strauss, author of the "*Leben Jesu,*" whose rejection of a historical Christianity is the legitimate fruit of his speculative philosophy, just as a similar rejection of the Christian miracles, and particularly the miracle of Christ's resurrection, by Theodore Parker, is the fruit of the metaphysical system, which, as he remarks himself, " underlies" his theology. " Strauss," says Professor Tholuck, in his "*Anzeiger,*" for May, 1836, "is a man who knows no other God than him who, in the human race, is constantly becoming man. He knows no Christ but the Jewish rabbi who made his confession of sin to John the Baptist ; and no heaven but that which speculative philosophy reveals for our enjoyment on the little planet we now inhabit." To the same purpose is Strauss's own language :—" As man, considered as a mere finite spirit, and restricted to himself, has no reality, so God, considered as an infinite Spirit, restricting himself to his infinity, has no reality. The infinite Spirit has reality only so far as he unites himself to finite spirits, (or manifests himself in them,) and the finite spirit has reality only so far as he sinks himself in the infinite."—*Leben Jesu*, p. 730.

Such is the last result of that boasted philosophy, which begins by explaining everything, and ends with doubting everything.—T.

exceedingly barren, an affection, so to speak, without result. Many great things are done on the earth, things at least that men call great. The activity of the mind responds to the activity of outward life. Each day sees some new plans brought to light, some new enterprises begun. But amid all these actions, form an estimate of those which have for their principle the love of God, and you will admit, if the religion of love be the best, it is not the practice of a great number. In fact, the love of God, if by this you mean a love, real, earnest, dominant, is not natural to the heart of man. And, let us be honest; how can we love, with such a love, a God from whom we are far removed by our sins and the worldliness of our affections; a God who, in our better moments, cannot appear to us except in the aspect of a judge; a God, whose paternal providence is veiled from our minds, because we know no better, or do not know at all, the adorable secret of all his procedure toward us? How can we love him, so long as we cannot account for the disorders of the physical and the moral worlds, and while the universe appears to us a vast arena, in which chance puts in competition justice and injustice, and coldly decides between them? A doubt, a single doubt on the end of life and the intentions of God, would serve to tarnish, nay more, to extinguish, in the anxious heart, the first germs of love. But this is, more or less, the condition we are in, without the light of revelation. To what, then, is love reduced, and, by consequence, the religion of sentiment, in the greater number of the persons who appear to have approached the nearest to its attainment? What! does he, think you, love God, who opens his heart merely to the fugitive emotion which is excited by the view of his beneficence spread over the whole face of nature? Does he love him, who, following the degree of sensibility with which he is endowed, yields to an involuntary tenderness, at the thought of that immense paternity which embraces all animated beings, from the seraph to the worm? One may experience this kind of love, and never be changed. If anything is evident, it is that the sensibility which sometimes overflows in tears, often leaves in the heart a large place for selfishness; just as our fellow-men do not always derive any advantage from the tenderness we have felt at a distance from them. Love, true love of God, is a love of his truth, of his holiness, of his entire will; true love is that which is reflected in obedience; that which renews and purifies the conscience.

This brings us to the fourth religion which man makes for himself, that of *conscience*. It is well, then, if in our turn we can say, this is good. For what is conscience, but the impulse to do the will of God, and to resemble him? And what do we want when we have arrived at this? Let us congratulate those who cleave to the religion of conscience, and regret that their number is so small. But what am I saying? Congratulate them! Let us think a little! Have we reflected on the course that opens before them? The religion of conscience! Is it not that which commands us to live for God, to do nothing but for God; to devote ourselves, body and soul, entirely to Him? Is it not that which teaches us that to refuse anything to Him, is to rob Him; because, by sovereign right, everything within and without us belongs to Him? Is it not that which teaches that we cannot do too much for Him, and that all our future efforts can never compensate for a single past neglect?

Is it not that, then, which condemns our life, absolutely and irrevocably, and presents us before Him, not as children, not even as supplicants, but as condemned criminals? Say, then, if the religion of conscience is good! Yes! for consciences free, indulgent to themselves, without delicacy, and without purity; but the greater your attachment to your duties, the more scrupulous you are to fulfil them, the more severe and complete the idea you have formed of the divine law, the more shall that religion be terrible to you; and, so far from offering you consolations, it will take away from you, one by one, all those you might derive from yourselves. Quit, for a moment, the scenes of the present, and the circle of Christianity; observe, at a glance, the religion of mankind, enter all their temples, look upon all their altars;—what do you see? Blood! Blood to honor the Deity! Ah! we are compelled to say that blood is there, for a thousand virtues neglected, a thousand obligations broken, a thousand enormities committed; that blood is the cry of a thousand consciences, which demand, from their entire nature, an impossible reparation, that blood is the solemn and terrible acknowledgment of the truths I urge upon you. And would you form an idea of this need of expiation? Know then, that the impossibility of solving the problem the anguish of turning forever in a circle, without issue, has driven man to a kind of despair, a despair which has become barbarous. For the sake of finding a worthy victim, man has recourse to man himself—human blood has flowed in the temples, and the torment has not ceased; human blood has effaced nothing! To what victim, then, should man resort? To a God? But how should such a thing enter into the heart of man?

We have passed in review all the systems of religion which would seem possible without Christianity. We think we have presented them with fidelity; we have done them justice; we have taken nothing from them. We might have demanded from them an account of what they owe to Christianity, and caused them to do honor to that holy religion, by a greater part of what they possess of what is specious, good and interesting, but we have abstained from that; we have confined ourselves, without further examination, to showing you the strength and the weakness of these systems. You are now, therefore, in a condition to pronounce judgment upon them. So far as it relates to us, here is our conclusion. In vain has man, in his search of the supreme good, called into exercise his reason, his imagination, his heart and his conscience; in vain has he laid all his powers under contribution; in vain has he done all that it is possible for man to do; everywhere in his systems there appear chasms wide and deep. The triple object of all religion, to enlighten, console and regenerate, is fulfilled neither by the one nor the other of these religions, nor by all of them together. Is the religion of the imagination the subject of inquiry? That is the charm of a few fugitive moments; it is neither the light, the support, nor the sanctification of the soul. Do we try the religion of thought? Its only reasonable pretension is to enlighten; but it fulfils it so badly, that it does nothing more than deepen the gloom which rests on religion. Do we address ourselves to the religion of sentiment? It moves the surface of the soul; it does not reach its depths, it does not regenerate it. In fine, the best of all these religions, that of conscience, by its very excellence, demonstrates the impotence of man to form a religion for himself. It can only show us the chasm which sin has made between us and God; but it cannot fill it up. It teaches us, that in order to be united to God, two things are necessary, which it does not give us, and which none of our faculties can give us,—PARDON and REGENERATION. The man who pretends to accomplish, by his own power, the work of his salvation, must first pardon and then regenerate himself. It is necessary he should efface the very last vestige of all his former sins, that is to say, that he should do what cannot be done. It is moreover necessary, that, declaring war with his nature, he should force it to love God, to love the good, to hate the evil; that he should renew his inclinations from their foundation; in a word, that he should destroy the old man, and create in himself the new. To ask you, if you can do such things, is to ask, if a criminal, alone in the bottom of his dungeon, can provide his own letters of pardon, or a combatant, chained hand and foot, can promise himself the victory. It is to ask you, if you can do that to-morrow, which you cannot do to-day; it is to ask you, if it will ever be possible, with the powers of your nature alone, to re-make that nature.

Nevertheless, there is not without this, a religion complete and satisfying,—say rather there is no religion at all. And without this, you have reason to believe yourselves abandoned by God. Ah, why should you not turn your attention to that gospel, which seems to have divined all the secrets of your nature, and which meets all the wants of your soul? Why should not the view of the cross, where your pardon is written, the promise of the Holy Spirit, source of REGENERATION, cause you to leap for joy! Why should you not with ardor, desire that the doctrine which remedies all, harmonizes all, satisfies all, should be as true as it is beautiful? Why can you give yourselves a moment's repose, before you enlighten your minds respecting it, by all the means in your power? If such a religion has not been given to man, he must die; yes, die of grief for having been condemned to live,—die of grief for having been formed with insatiable desires after perfection, with an ardent thirst for God, and to feel that these desires, and this thirst, are only a cruel deception, a fatal mockery of the unknown power that created us!

But shall I hear from Christians, not the joyous accents of souls convinced, but the anxious appeals of hearts that are doubting still? No! let us together hail with our benedictions, that religion, alone complete, which responds to all the wants of man, in offering to each of his faculties an inexhaustible aliment; a religion of the imagination, to which it offers magnificent prospects; a religion of the heart, which it softens by the exhibition of a love above all love; a religion of thought, which it attaches to the contemplation of a system, the most vast and harmonious; a religion of the conscience, which it renders at once more delicate and tranquil; but above all, a religion of the grace and love of God; for it is necessarily all these combined. Why should not the truth entire, satisfy man entire? Let us hail, with admiration, that religion which reconciles all these contrasts, a religion of justice and grace, of fear and love, of obedience and liberty, of activity and repose, of faith and reason; for if error has cut up and divided everything in man, if it has made of his soul a vast scene of contradictions, truth brings back all into unity. Such is the religion which never entered into the heart of man, even in the highest culture of his moral sense, and the most extensive development of his intelligence; or, as the apostle expresses it, "which none of the princes of this world have known."

That which remained concealed from philosophers and sages, in the most brilliant periods of the human intellect, twelve poor fishermen, from the lakes of Judea, quitted their nets to announce to the world. Certainly they had not more of imagination, of reason, of heart, or of conscience, than the rest of mankind; yet they put to silence the wisdom of sages, emptied the schools of philosophers, closed the gates of every temple, extinguished the fire on every altar. They exhibited to the world their crucified Master, and the world recognized in him that which their anxious craving had sought in vain for three thousand years. A new morality, new social relations, and a new universe sprang into being, at the voice of these poor people, ignorant of letters, and of all philosophy. It remains with your good sense to judge, if these twelve fishermen have used their own wisdom, or the wisdom which cometh from above.

We stop at this point,—man is found incapable of forming a religion, and God has come to the aid of his weakness. Bless, then, your God from the bottom of your heart, you, who after long search, have, at last, found an asylum. And you who still float on the vast sea of human opinions, you who, violently driven from one system to another, feel your anguish increasing, and your heart becoming more and more tarnished; you who to this day have never been able to live with God, nor without God,—come and see, if this gospel, scarcely noticed by your heedless eyes, is not perhaps that, for which you call with so many fruitless sighs. And, thou, God of the gospel! God of nations! Infinite Love! reveal thyself to wounded hearts, make thyself known to fainting spirits, and cause them to know joy, peace, and true virtue.

THE MYSTERIES OF CHRISTIANITY.

"Things which have not entered into the heart of man."—1 Cor. ii. 9.

We have seen that we are not in a condition to give ourselves a religion, and that God, in his goodness, has condescended to aid our weakness. But the reason of man does not voluntarily permit itself to be convinced of impotence; it does not willingly suffer its limits to be prescribed; it is strongly tempted to reject ideas which it has not conceived, a religion which it has not invented; and if the doctrines proposed to it are, in their nature, mysterious and incomprehensible, this feeling of dissatisfaction proceeds to open revolt, and in the case of many, results in an obstinate scepticism.

I do not comprehend, therefore I do not believe; the gospel is full of mysteries, therefore I do not receive the gospel;—such is one of the favorite arguments of infidelity. To see how much is made of this, and what confidence it inspires, we might believe it solid, or, at least specious; but it is neither the one nor the other; it will not bear the slightest attention, the most superficial examination of reason; and if it still enjoys some favor in the world, this is but a proof of the lightness of our judgments upon things worthy of our most serious attention.

Upon what, in fact, does this argument rest? Upon the claim of comprehending everything in the religion which God has offered or could offer us. A claim equally *unjust, unreasonable, useless.* This we proceed to develop.

In the first place, it is an unjust claim. It is to demand of God what he does not owe us. To prove this, let us suppose that God has given a religion to man, and let us further suppose that religion to be the Gospel; for this absolutely changes nothing to the argument. We may believe that God was free, at least, with reference to us, to give us or not to give us a religion; but it must be admitted that in granting it, he contracts engagements to us, and that the first favor lays him under a necessity of conferring other favors. For this is merely to say, that God must be consistent, and that he finishes what he has begun. Since it is by a written revelation he manifests his designs respecting us, it is necessary he should fortify that revelation by all the authority which would at least determine us to receive it; it is necessary he should give us the means of judging whether the men who speak to us in his name are really sent by him; in a word, it is necessary we should be assured that the Bible is truly the word of God.

It would not indeed be necessary that the conviction of each of us should be gained by the same kind of evidence. Some shall be led to Christianity by the historical or external arguments; they shall prove to themselves the truth of the Bible, as the truth of all history is proved; they shall satisfy themselves that the books of which it it is composed are certainly those of the times and of the authors to which they are ascribed. This settled, they shall compare the prophecies contained in these ancient documents with the events that have happened in subsequent ages; they shall assure themselves of the reality of the miraculous facts related in these books, and shall thence infer the necessary intervention of divine power, which alone disposes the forces of nature, and can alone interrupt or modify their action. Others, less fitted for such investigations, shall be struck with the internal evidence of the Holy Scriptures. Finding there the state of their souls perfectly described, their wants fully expressed, and the true remedies for their maladies completely indicated; struck with a character of truth and candor which nothing can imitate; in fine, feeling themselves in their inner nature moved, changed, renovated, by the mysterious influence of these holy writings, they shall acquire, by such means, a conviction of which they cannot always give an account to others, but which is not the less legitimate, irresistible, and immovable. Such is the double road by which an entrance is gained into the asylum of faith. But it was due from the wisdom of God, from his justice, and, we venture to say it, from the honor of his government, that he should open to man this double road; for, if he desired man to be saved by knowledge, on the same principle, he engaged himself to furnish him the means of knowledge.

Behold, whence come the obligations of the Deity with reference to us,—which obligations he has fulfilled. Enter on this double method of proof. Interrogate history, time and places, respecting the authenticity of the Scriptures; grasp all the difficulties, sound all the objections; do not permit yourselves to be too easily convinced; be the more severe upon that book, as it professes to contain the sovereign rule of your life, and the disposal of your destiny; you are permitted to do this, nay, you are encouraged to do it, provided you proceed to the investigation with the requisite capacities and with pure intentions. Or, if you prefer another method, examine, with an honest heart, the contents of the Scriptures; inquire, while you run over the words of Jesus, if ever man spake like this man; inquire if the wants of your soul, long deceived, and the anxieties of your spirit, long cherished in vain, do not, in the teaching and work of Christ, find that satisfaction and repose which no wisdom was ever able to procure you; breathe, if I may thus express myself, that perfume of truth, of candor and purity, which exhales from every page of the gospel; see, if, in all these respects, it does not bear the undeniable seal of inspiration and divinity. Finally, test it, and if the gospel produces upon you a contrary effect, return to the books and the wisdom of men, and ask of them what Christ has not been able to give you. But, if, neglecting these two ways, made accessible to you, and trodden by the feet of ages, you desire, before all, that the Christian religion should, in every point, render itself comprehensible to your mind, and complacently strip itself of all mysteries; if you wish to penetrate beyond the veil, to find there, not the aliment which gives life to the soul, but that which would gratify your restless curiosity, I maintain that you raise against God a claim the most indiscreet, the most rash and unjust; for he has never engaged, either tacitly or expressly, to discover to you the secret which your eye craves; and such audacious importunity is fit only to excite his indignation. He has given you what he owed you, more indeed than he owed you;—the rest is with himself.

If a claim so unjust could be admitted, where, I ask you, would be the limit of your demands? Already you require more from God than he has accorded to angels; for these eternal mysteries which trouble you,—the harmony of the divine prescience with human freedom,—the origin of evil and its ineffable remedy,—the incarnation of the eternal WORD,—the relations of the God-man with his Father,—the atoning virtue of his sacrifice,—the regenerating efficacy of the Spirit-comforter,—all these things are secrets, the knowledge of which is hidden from angels themselves, who, according to the word of the apostle, stoop to explore their depths, and cannot. If you reproach the Eternal for having kept the knowledge of these divine mysteries to himself, why do you not reproach him for the thousand other limits he has prescribed to you? Why not reproach him for not having given you wings like a bird, to visit the regions which till now have been scanned only by your eyes? Why not reproach him for not giving you, besides the five senses with which you are provided, ten other senses which he has perhaps granted to other creatures, and which procure for them perceptions of which you have no idea? Why not, in fine, reproach him for having caused the darkness of night to succeed the brightness of day invariably on the earth? Ah! you do not reproach him for that. You love that night which brings rest to so many fatigued bodies and weary spirits; which suspends, in so many wretches, the feeling of grief;—that night, during which orphans, slaves, and criminals cease to be, because over all their misfortunes and sufferings it spreads, with the opiate of sleep, the thick veil of oblivion; you love that night, which, peopling the deserts of the heavens with ten thousand stars, not known to the day, reveals the infinite to our ravished imagination. Well, then, why do you not, for a similar reason, love the night of divine mysteries,—night, gracious and salutary, in which reason humbles itself, and finds refreshment and repose; where the darkness even is a revelation; where one of the principal attributes of God, immensity, discovers itself much more fully to our mind; where, in fine, the tender relations he has permitted us to form with himself, are guarded from all admixture of familiarity, by the thought that the Being who has humbled himself to us, is, at the same time, the inconceivable God who reigns before all time, who includes in himself all existences and all conditions of existence, the centre of all thought, the law of all law, the supreme and final reason of everything! So that, if you are just, instead of reproaching him for the secrets of religion, you will bless him that he has enveloped you in mysteries.

But this claim is not only unjust towards God; it is also in itself exceedingly *unreasonable.*

What is religion? It is God putting himself in communication with man; the Creator with the creature, the infinite with the finite. There already, without going further, is a mystery; a mystery common to all religions, impenetrable in all religions. If, then, everything which is a mystery offends you, you are arrested on the threshold, I will not say of Christianity, but of every religion; I say, even of that religion which is called *natural*, because it rejects revelation and miracles; for it necessarily implies, at the very least, a connection, a communication of some sort between God and man,—the contrary being equivalent to atheism. Your claim prevents you from having any belief; and because you have not been willing to be Christians, it will not allow you to be deists.

"It is of no consequence," you say, "we pass over that difficulty; we suppose between God and us connections we cannot conceive; we admit them because they are necessary to us. But this is the only step we are willing to take: we have already yielded too much to yield more." Say more,—say you have granted too much not to grant much more, not to grant all! You have consented to admit, without comprehending it, that there may be communications from God to you, and from you to God. But consider well what is implied in such a supposition. It implies that you are dependent, and yet free,—this you do not comprehend;—it implies that the Spirit of God can make itself understood by your spirit,—this you do not comprehend;—it implies that your prayers may exert an influence on the will of God,—this you do not comprehend. It is necessary you should receive all these mysteries, in order to establish with God connections the most vague and superficial, and by the very side of which atheism is placed. And when, by a powerful effort with yourselves, you have done so much as to admit these mysteries, you recoil from those of Christianity! You have accepted the foundation, and refuse the superstructure! You have accepted the principle and refuse the details! You are right, no doubt, so soon as it is proved to you, that the religion which contains these mysteries does not come from God; or rather, that these mysteries contain contradictory ideas. But you are not justified in denying them, for the sole reason that you do not understand them; and the reception you have given to the first kind of mysteries compels you, by the same rule, to receive the others.

This is not all. Not only are mysteries an inseparable part, nay, the very substance of all religion ; but it is absolutely impossible that a true religion should not present a great number of mysteries. If it is true, it ought to teach more truths respecting God and divine things, than any other, than all others together ; but each of these truths has a relation to the infinite, and by consequence, borders on a mystery. How should it be otherwise in religion, when it is thus in nature itself? Behold God in nature! The more he gives us to contemplate, the more he gives to astonish us. To each creature is attached some mystery. A grain of sand is an abyss! Now, if the manifestation which God has made of himself in nature suggests to the observer a thousand questions which cannot be answered, how will it be, when to that first revelation, another is added ; when God the Creator and Preserver reveals himself under new aspects as God the Reconciler and Saviour ? Shall not mysteries multiply with discoveries ? With each new day, shall we not see associated a new night ? And shall we not purchase each increase of knowledge with an increase of ignorance ? Has not the doctrine of grace, so necessary, so consoling, alone opened a profound abyss, into which, for eighteen centuries, rash and restless spirits have been constantly plunging ?

It is, then, clearly necessary that Christianity should, more than any other religion, be mysterious, simply because it is true. Like mountains, which, the higher they are, cast the larger shadows, the gospel is the more obscure and mysterious on account of its sublimity. After this, will you be indignant that you do not comprehend everything in the gospel ? It would, forsooth, be a truly surprising thing, if the ocean could not be held in the hollow of your hand, or uncreated wisdom within the limits of your intelligence! It would be truly unfortunate, if a finite being could not embrace the infinite, and that, in the vast assemblage of things, there should be some idea beyond its grasp! In other words, it would be truly unfortunate, if God himself should know something which man does not know!

Let us acknowledge, then, how insensate is such a claim when it is made with reference to religion.

But let us also recollect how much, in making such a claim, we shall be in opposition to ourselves; for the submission we dislike in religion, we cherish in a thousand other things. It happens to us every day to admit things we do not understand; and to do so without the least repugnance. The things, the knowledge of which is refused us, are much more numerous than we perhaps think. Few diamonds are perfectly pure; still fewer truths are perfectly clear. The union of our soul with our body is a mystery; our most familiar emotions and affections are a mystery; the action of thought and of will is a mystery; our very existence is a mystery. Why do we admit these various facts? Is it because we understand them? No, certainly, but because they are self-evident, and because they are truths by which we live. In religion we have no other course to take. We ought to know whether it is true and necessary; and once convinced of these two points, we ought, like the angels, to submit to the necessity of being ignorant of some things.

And why do we not submit cheerfully to a privation, which after all is not one? To desire the knowledge of mysteries is to desire what is utterly *useless;* it is to raise, as I have said before, a claim the most vain and idle. What, in reference to us, is the object of the gospel? Evidently to regenerate and save us. But it attains this end wholly by the things it reveals. Of what use would it be to know those it conceals from us? We possess the knowledge which can enlighten our consciences, rectify our inclinations, renew our hearts; what should we gain, if we possessed other knowledge? It infinitely concerns us to know that the Bible is the word of God; does it equally concern us to know in what way the holy men that wrote it were moved by the Holy Ghost? It is of infinite moment to us to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; need we know precisely in what way the divine and human natures are united in his adorable person? It is of infinite importance for us to know that unless we are born again we cannot enter the kingdom of God, and that the Holy Spirit is the author of the new birth;—shall we be further advanced if we know the divine process by which that wonder is performed? Is it not enough for us to know the truths that save? Of what use, then, would it be to know those which have not the slightest bearing on our salvation? "Though I know all mysteries," says St. Paul, "and have not charity, I am nothing." St. Paul was content not to know, provided he had charity; shall not we, following his example, be content also without knowledge, provided that, like him, we have charity, that is to say, life?

But some one will say, If the knowledge of mysteries is really without influence on our salvation, why have they been indicated to us at all? What if it should be to teach us not to be too prodigal of our *wherefores!* if it should be to serve as an exercise of our faith, a test of our submission! But we will not stop with such a reply.

Observe, I pray you, in what manner the mysteries of which you complain have taken their part in religion. You readily perceive they are not by themselves, but associated with truths which have a direct bearing on your salvation. They contain them, they serve to envelop them; but they are not themselves the truths that save. It is with these mysteries as it is with the vessel that contains a medicinal draught; it is not the vessel that cures, but the draught; yet the draught could not be presented without the vessel. Thus each truth that saves is contained in a mystery, which, in itself, has no power to save. So the great work of expiation is necessarily attached to the incarnation of the Son of God, which is a mystery; so the sanctifying graces of the new covenant are necessarily connected with the effluence of the Holy Spirit, which is a mystery; so, too, the divinity of religion finds a seal and an attestation in the miracles, which are mysteries. Everywhere the light is born from darkness, and darkness accompanies the light. These two orders of truths are so united, so interlinked, that you cannot remove the one without the other; and each of the mysteries you attempt to tear from religion, would carry with it one of the truths which bear directly on your regeneration and salvation. Accept the mysteries, then, not as truths that can save you, but as the necessary conditions of the merciful work of the Lord in your behalf.

The true point at issue in reference to religion is this:—Does the religion which is proposed to us, change the heart, unite to God, prepare for heaven? If Christianity produces these effects, we will leave the enemies of the cross free to revolt against its mysteries, and tax them with absurdity. The gospel, we will say to them, is then an absurdity ; you have discovered it. But behold what a new species of absurdity that certainly is, which attaches man to all his duties, regulates human life better than all the doctrines of sages, plants in his bosom harmony, order, and peace, causes him joyfully to fulfil all the offices of civil life, renders him better fitted to live, better fitted to die, and which, were it generally received, would be the support and safeguard of society! Cite to us, among all human absurdities, a single one which produces such effects. If that "foolishness" we preach produces effects like these, is it not natural to conclude that it is truth itself? And if these things have not entered the heart of man, it is not because they are absurd, but because they are divine.

Make, my readers, but a single reflection. You are obliged to confess that none of the religions which man may invent can satisfy his wants, or save his soul. Thereupon you have a choice to make. You will either reject them all as insufficient and false, and seek for nothing better, since man cannot invent better, and then you will abandon to chance, to caprice of temperament or of opinion, your moral life and future destiny ; or you will adopt that other religion which some treat as folly, and it will render you holy and pure, blameless in the midst of a perverse generation, united to God by love, and to your brethren by charity, indefatigable in doing good, happy in life, happy in death. Suppose, after all this, you shall be told that this religion is false ; but, meanwhile, it has restored in you the image of God, re-established your primitive connections with that great Being, and put you in a condition to enjoy life and the happiness of heaven. By means of it you have become such that at the last day, it is impossible that God should not receive you as his children and make you partakers of his glory. You are made fit for paradise, nay, paradise has commenced for you even here, because you love. This religion has done for you what all religion proposes, and what no other has realized. Nevertheless, by the supposition, it is false! And what more could it do, were it true? Rather do you not see that this is a splendid proof of its truth? Do you not see that it is impossible that a religion which leads to God should not come from God, and that the absurdity is precisely that of supposing that you can be regenerated by a falsehood?

Suppose that afterwards, as at the first, you do not comprehend. It seems necessary, then, you should be saved by the things you do not comprehend. Is that a misfortune? Are you the less saved? Does it become you to demand from God an explanation of an obscurity which does not injure you, when, with reference to everything essential, he has been prodigal of light? The first disciples of Jesus, men without culture and learning, received truths which they did not comprehend, and spread them through the world. A crowd of sages and men of genius have received, from the hands of these poor people, truths which they comprehended no more than they. The ignorance of the one, and the science of the other, have been equally docile. Do, then, as the ignorant and the wise have done. Embrace with affection those truths which have never entered into your heart, and which will save you. Do not lose, in vain discussions, the time which is gliding away, and which is bearing you into the cheering or appalling light of eternity. Hasten to be saved. Love now; one day you will know. May the Lord Jesus prepare you for that period of light, of repose, and of happiness!

THE GOSPEL COMPREHENDED BY THE HEART.

" Things which have not entered into the heart of man, but which God hath prepared for them that love him."—1 Cor. ii. 9.

God has destined the world to be, not only the theatre of our activity, but also the object of our study. He has concealed in the depths of nature innumerable secrets, which he invites us to fathom ; innumerable truths, which he encourages us to discover. To penetrate these secrets, to discover these truths, it is necessary to possess certain intellectual faculties, and to have them suitably exercised, but nothing more. The dispositions of the heart have no direct influence on the acquisition of this kind of knowledge. It is with this knowledge, as it is with " the rain, which God causeth to fall on the just and the unjust, and the sun which he maketh to shine upon the good and the evil." To acquire it, does not necessarily suppose a pure heart or a benevolent character ; and, unhappily, it is too common to see the finest gifts of genius united with the most deplorable selfishness and the deepest depravity of manners. God seems to have prepared the truths of human science indifferently for his friends and enemies. It is not thus with the truths of religion. God, it is said, in the Scriptures, " hath prepared them for those that love him." Not that he has excluded from the possession of them, men of learning and genius ; but neither learning nor genius is sufficient here as in the other sciences. Love is the true interpreter of the truths of the gospel. The "wisdom of this world and of the princes of this world," is vanquished by the simplicity of love, love and wisdom among them that are perfect, conformably to that declaration of St. John, "He that loveth God is born of God and knoweth God."

That which is often seen occurring between two persons of different languages, takes place between God and man ; it is necessary that a person versed in both languages should intervene between the two parties, and listening to the words of the one, put them within reach of the other, by rendering them into the idiom he understands. But between God and man, between the gospel and our soul, that interpreter is love. Love renders intelligible to man the truths of the gospel,—not indeed those abstract truths which relate to the essence of God, the knowledge of which, as we have seen, is equally inaccessible and useless to us,—but those other truths, which concern our relations to God, and constitute the very foundation of religion. These are the truths which escape from reason, and which love seizes without difficulty.

You are surprised, perhaps, to see filled by love, by a sentiment of the heart, a function which seems to you to belong only to reason. But please to reflect that the greater part of our knowledge is derived to us immediately from another source than reason. When we desire to obtain a knowledge of a natural object, it is, primarily, our senses we make use of, and not our reason. It is at first by sight that we acquire a knowledge of the size and form of bodies; by hearing, that of sounds; and by smell, that of odors. It is necessary that reason should afterwards perform a part, and connect its operations with those of the organs; but whatever may be the importance of its intervention, we must admit that the knowledge of sensible objects and their properties is derived essentially from the senses.

Things transpire in no other way in the moral world. It is not by the intellect alone, nor by the intellect first, that we can judge of things of this order. To know them we must have a sense also, which is called the moral sense. The intellect may come in afterwards as an auxiliary; it observes, compares, and classes our impressions, but it does not produce them; and it would be as little reasonable to pretend that we owe them to it, as to affirm that it is by the ear we obtain the knowledge of colors, by sight that of perfumes, and by smell that of sounds and harmonies. The things of the heart are not truly comprehended but by the heart.

Permit us to dwell a moment upon this idea; for we feel the necessity of explaining it thoroughly. In saying that the heart comprehends, do we say that it becomes reason, or that it conducts a process of reasoning? By no means. The heart does not comprehend like the reason; but it comprehends as well, if not better. As to the reason, what is it to comprehend? It is to seize the thread of logical deduction, the chain of ideas which joins together two or more facts; it is to attain conviction, assurance, by means other than experience; it is to be placed by the intellect in relative connection with those objects, an immediate contact with which is denied us. The comprehension of the mind, to speak plainly, is nothing more than a supplement to the inevitable chasms in our experience.* These chasms occur either from the absence of the objects themselves, or from their nature, which has no point of contact with ours. If these two obstacles did not exist, or if it were possible to remove them, man would have nothing to comprehend; for he would touch, he would grasp, he would taste everything. Reason in him would be replaced by intuition. Wherever intuition has place, there is no more comprehension, for it is more than comprehension; or if any one chooses that it should be comprehension, it is a comprehension of a new nature, of a superior order, which explains everything, without effort, to which everything is clear, but which it cannot communicate, by words, to the reason of another.

But it is the same with the comprehension of the heart. Doubtless it has its precise limits. It extends to everything within the domain of sentiment, but to nothing beyond. Reason, however, has its limits also, quite as distinctly marked, and can no more overleap them than the heart those which belong to it. Applied to things which belong exclusively to the sphere of sentiment, it wanders in obscurity; it passes by the side of sentiment as if it were a stranger; it neither understands nor is understood; and retires from a useless struggle, without having either taken or given anything. Reason on the one side, and the heart on the other, do not comprehend each other. They have no mutual agreement, except in that of a disdainful pity.

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* The word *experience* is here used in its strictly philosophical sense. It embraces the facts of sensation and consciousness, the emotions and perceptions of the mind. These constitute an assemblage of facts, which it is the province of reason, on the ground of its own intuitive convictions, first to analyze, and then combine, under general heads or systems; and thus supply the deficiencies or *chasms* in our experience. It especially perceives and classifies relations, and deduces from, perhaps communicates to, the whole those general ideas which embody, in their comprehensive range, an infinite number of scattered, but related facts. Reason, therefore, is a *supplement* to our experience, and is a purely intellectual process. It involves no feeling or affection, and may exist, in the greatest perfection, without a single holy or virtuous impulse.—T.

To render this truth more evident, suppose, on the one hand, a generous man, a hero, a soul ever burning with the lofty flame of devotion; and on the other, a man of quick intelligence, of reason vast and profound, but deprived, were it possible, of all sensibility, do you not believe that the first would, all his life long, be an enigma to the other? How, indeed, could the latter conceive of those transports of enthusiasm, those acts of self-denial, and those sublime expressions, the source of which never existed in his own soul? "The spiritual man," says St. Paul, "judgeth all things, and no one (unless spiritual) can judge him." Let us, by supposition, apply this expression to the sensitive and generous being of whom we speak; no one, unless he has the germs of the same emotions, can form a judgment of him; a fact distinctly recognized by those who have said, that great souls pass through the world without being understood.

Affectation! hypocrisy! is the cry frequently heard, in view of certain manifestations, and especially of religious manifestations. An ardor which glows in the depths of the soul, which engrosses all the faculties, and which is incessantly renewed from its own proper source, appears to some too strange to be credited. In order to believe it, they need only to feel it; but certain it is, that unless they do feel it, they cannot conceive of it. And they will continue to tax with affectation and hypocrisy, a sentiment which perhaps restrains itself, and discovers only half of its energy. A mistake, how natural! All the efforts of the most active intellect cannot give us the conception of the taste of a fruit we have never tasted, or the perfume of a flower we have never smelt, much less of an affection we have never felt.

It is with the heights of the soul, as it is with the sublimities of the firmament. When on a serene night, millions of stars sparkle in the depths of the sky, the gorgeous splendor of the starry vault ravishes every one that has eyes; but he to whom Providence has denied the blessing of sight, would in vain possess a mind open to the loftiest conceptions; in vain would his intellectual capacity transcend what is common among men. All that intelligence, and all the power he might add by study to his rare gifts, will not aid him in forming a single idea of that ravishing spectacle; while at his side, a man, without talent or culture, has only to raise his eyes, to embrace at a glance, and in some measure enjoy, all the splendors of the firmament, and, through his vision, to receive into his soul the impressions which such a spectacle cannot fail to produce.

Another sky, and one as magnificent as the azure vault stretched over our heads, is revealed to us in the gospel. Divine truths are the stars of that mystic sky, and they shine in it brighter and purer than the stars of the firmament; but there must be an eye to see them, and that eye is love. The gospel is a work of love. Christianity is only love realized under its purest form; and since the light of the world cannot be known without an eye, love cannot be comprehended but by the heart.

You may have exhausted all the powers of your reason, and all the resources of your knowledge, to establish the authenticity of the Scriptures; you may have perfectly explained the apparent contradictions of the sacred books; you may have grasped the connection of the fundamental truths of the gospel; you may have done all this, yet if you do not love, the gospel will be to you nothing but a dead letter, and a sealed book; its revelations will appear to you but as abstractions, and naked ideas; its system but a speculation unique in its kind; nay, more, whatever in the gospel is most attractive, most precious and sweet, but an arbitrary conception, a strange dogma, a painful test of your faith, and nothing more.

But let love, sweet, gracious, luminous, interpreting, come between the gospel and the human soul, and the truth of the gospel shall have a meaning,—and one as clear as it is profound. Then shall your soul find itself free and happy, in the midst of these strange revelations. Then shall those truths you have accepted, through submission and obedience, become to you as familiar and as necessarily true, as those common every-day truths, upon which depends your existence. Then shall you penetrate, without an effort, into the marvellous system, which your reason dreaded, so to speak, to see too near, in a confused apprehension of being tempted to infidelity. Then shall you probably be astonished, that you had never perceived, conjectured, discovered it; that previous to revelation, you had never found out that such a system was as necessary to the glory of God, as to the happiness of man.

So long as man, with reason alone, has climbed up Calvary, and gone around the cross, he has seen nothing but darkness in the divine work of expiation. For whole ages might he remain in contemplation before that mysterious fact, but would not succeed in raising from it the veil. Ah! how can reason, cold reason, comprehend such a thing as the substitution of the innocent for the guilty; as the compassion which reveals itself in severity of punishment, in that shedding of blood, without which, it is said, there can be no expiation. It will not make, I dare affirm, a single step towards the knowledge of that divine mystery, until casting away its ungrateful speculations, it yields to a power more competent to the task of terminating the difficulty. That power is the heart; which fixes itself entirely on the love that shines forth in the work of redemption; cleaves without distraction to the sacrifice of the adorable victim; lets the natural impression of that unparalleled love penetrate freely, and develop itself gradually, in its interior. O how quickly, then, are the veils torn away, and the shadows dissipated forever! How little difficulty does he that loves, find in comprehending love! How natural to him does it appear, that God, infinite in all things, should be infinite also in his compassion! How inconceivable to him, on the other hand, that human hearts should not be capable of feeling the beauty of a work, without which God could not manifest himself entire! How astonished is he at the blindness of those who read and re-read the Scriptures without comprehending the central truth; who pass and re-pass before a love all-divine, without recognizing or even perceiving a work all-divine!

The Holy Scriptures have spoken to him of prayer, as a powerful means of attracting the grace of God; as a force to which divine power is willing to submit, and which seems, in some sense, to share with the Deity the empire of the universe. Before such an idea reason remains confounded. There is no objection it does not involuntarily raise against a doctrine, which, after all, belongs to the very essence of religion. But to the heart, how beautiful is this doctrine ; how natural, how probable, how necessary! How eagerly the heart embraces it! How it hastens to put it in the rank of its most cherished convictions! And how wretchedly and foolishly *wise* do those appear to it, who, feeling on the one hand, that religion without prayer is not religion, and on the other, that the bearing of prayer upon their destinies is inexplicable, resolve to remain in uncertainty on the subject, waiting and not praying at all!

It is the same with many other mysteries of Christianity, or rather with Christianity as a whole. Even to those who receive it as a divine religion, and believe it intellectually, it is veiled, it is empty, it is dead, so long as they do not call the heart to their aid. Among sincere believers, there are many who have gone around Christianity, a religion of their intellect, as around an impenetrable sanctuary, knocking in turn at all the doors of that asylum, without finding one open, and returning without success to those already tried many times, believing and not believing at the same time, Christians by their wishes, pagans by their hopes, convinced but not persuaded, enlightened but not consoled. To such I address myself; I appeal to their sincerity, and ask them, Whence comes it that you believe, and as yet have only the responsibilities, not the blessings, of faith? How happens it, that you carry your faith as a yoke that oppresses and weighs you down, not as wings which raise you above your miseries and the world? How comes it, that, in the bosom of that religion you have accepted, you are strangers, exiles, and as if out of your natural atmosphere? How is it that you are not at home in your father's house? Let us put the finger upon the wound. It is that your heart is not yet touched. The heart of Lydia must be *opened,* before she can understand the things spoken by Paul. So also you heart must be opened, in order to understand the truths which only the heart can understand. Or, to use the energetic language of Scripture, the heart of flesh must take, in your bosom, the place of the heart of stone.

Alas! with a conviction firmly established, with an orthodoxy the most perfect, how many do we see, strangers to true faith, how many sceptical believers, how many who have not doubted the truth of the Scriptures a single day of their life, who read them assiduously, who know them even by heart, and who, notwithstanding all this, do not believe at all! Ah, it is that faith is something else than the product of the intellect; it is that faith is love. Knowledge may give us convictions; love alone gives us life.

The first advice that reason ought to give us, should be to refuse reason in everything which does not belong to its jurisdiction. But reason is proud, reason is dogmatic; it will not submit. What then does our Heavenly Father do when he desires to save a soul? He leaves it for a time, to struggle with its speculations, and to vex itself with their impotence. When it is weary and despairing, when it has acknowledged that it is equally incapable of stifling or of satisfying its craving for light, he takes advantage of its humiliation; he lays his hand upon that soul, exhausted by its efforts, wounded by its falls, and compels it to sue for quarter. Then it humbles itself, submits, groans; it cries for succor; it renounces the claim to know, and desires only to believe; it pretends not to comprehend, it only aspires to live. Then the heart commences its functions; it takes the place of reason; anguished and craving, the heart is such as God would have it. It sues for grace, and lo! there is grace; it asks for aid, and aid comes; it craves salvation, and salvation is given! On that heart, confused and miserable, is then bestowed, nay lavished, all that was refused to reason, proud and haughty. Its poverty enables it to conceive what its wealth kept it from knowing. It comprehends with ease, it accepts with ardor, the truths which it needs, and without which no human soul can enjoy peace or happiness. And thus is fulfilled the word of wisdom: "Out of the heart proceed the springs of life."

Will ye come, proud spirits, and demand from such an one an account of his faith? Certainly he will not explain to you what is inexplicable; in this respect he will send you away poorly satisfied. But, if he says to you, if he can say to you,—I love!—ought not such a response to satisfy you? If he can say,—I no longer belong to myself, nor to honor, nor to the world; my meat is to do the will of my heavenly Father; I aspire to eternal good; I love, in God, all my brethren, with a cordial affection; I am content to live, I shall be happy to die; henceforth all is harmony within me; my energies and activities, my destiny and desires, my affections and thoughts, are all in accordance; the world, this life, and human things are not the mystery which torments me, nor the contradiction that causes me to despair; in a word, I am raised to newness of life. If he says, if he can say to you all this, and his whole life corroborates his words, ah, then, do not waste on him vain reasonings; try not to refute him; he has truth, for he has life. He touches with his hands, he sees with his eyes, he perceives, in some sort, with all his senses, a truth which all the arguments in the world could not establish with so much certainty, which all the arguments in the world cannot shake. Does the person who enjoys sight need to be told there is light? Can one in good health be persuaded he is sick? These are irrefragable verities, the proof of which is in himself, nay more, of which he is himself the living proof.

Thus the truths of the gospel have changed his heart; but the Spirit of God must, first of all, have prepared it to receive them. Let us not lose sight of these two facts:—it is the gospel which renews us, and it is the Spirit of God which enables us to receive the gospel into our heart. When we have received it, when in our heart, lately sick and insane, love has established his immutable empire, that love becomes an abundant source of light. By it a thousand obscurities of the word are cleared away. Its flame imparts no less light than heat. Delightful thought! the more we love, the more we know. Such is the experience of the Christian. Do you not wish to feel it, slaves of reason, melancholy victims of a knowledge which mistakes its limits and exaggerates its rights? Ye who know, but do not live, will you not ask from God love in order to comprehend love, love in order to know, love in order to live?

O, God, whom we should never have known hadst thou not deigned to discover thyself to us in the light of the gospel, complete the great work thou hast begun. Give us a heart to understand the truths thou hast revealed! Let the light of love, shed in our hearts by thee, disperse all the obscurities of thy word! Let thy goodness, let thy marvellous wisdom, keep from us no other secrets than those which are useless for us to know; teach us by love the most perfect of all wisdom; render the most simple wise in the science of salvation! Thy Spirit, O Lord, is love, as thou thyself art love. Diffuse it through the whole earth; spread, in every place, that holy flame; attract all hearts to thyself; make of all souls one single soul, in a common sentiment of adoration and devotion! Lord! we shall know all, when we know how to love; we shall rejoice in a light which is not the product of laborious study, but one which sanctifies and consoles! Then truly shalt thou have spoken to us in the gospel. Then shall it be seen that thou hast given to us a message of love and peace; and our conviction, cold, sterile, useless, shall be changed into a living faith, full of hope, full of good fruits.

FOLLY OF THE TRUTH.*

"We preach Christ crucified, ... to the Greeks foolishness."—1 Cor. i. 23.

Christianity has not left to infidelity the satisfaction of being the first to tax it with folly. It has hastened to bring this accusation against itself. It has professed the bold design of saving men by a folly. Upon this point it has suffered no illusion; it knew that its doctrine would pass for an insane one; it knew it before experience of the fact, before any one had said it; and it went forth, with this folly on its lips, this folly for a standard, to the conquest of the world. If, then, it is foolish, it is so consciously and voluntarily; and those who reproach it on this account, will, at least, be obliged to confess that it has foreseen, and braved their reproach.

Never did so calm a foresight, so just an appreciation of obstacles, means and chances, distinguish the author of a system or the founder of a religion. Never did any one enter so fully into the spirit of his opponents, and transport himself so completely from his own point of view to theirs. When it is seen in what respect Christianity judges itself contrary to the world, and the world contrary to it, we have an idea of incompatibility so essential and profound, that we cannot help asking, with what hope, and so to speak, with what right, does such a religion propose itself to the world; and a choice remains only between two suppositions, that of an extravagance, absolutely unparalleled, or of a secret inspiration and a supernatural power.

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* The word *folié* is used by French medical writers for *insanity;* and it is to madness, rather than simple folly, to which our author in this discourse refers.—T.

Of course, we should not dream of pretending that this characteristic of a doctrine was, by itself, a presumption in favor of its truth. Error, too, may have the appearance of folly, for error is sometimes a folly, I mean in the judgment of men; for it is ever such in the eyes of God. But this we say, that, if religion were destitute of such a characteristic, we could not presume it to be true. A religion, which should appear reasonable to the whole world, could not be the true one; in that general assent accorded to it, without opposition, I recognize the fact, that God has not spoken; the seal is not broken, the light has not burst forth; I must still wait.

This idea itself is not a folly; and if its truth does not strike at first, if it does not present itself as a revelation of common sense, it is deduced without difficulty from other truths which common sense reveals, and which no man, unless deprived of this common sense itself, dreams of disavowing. Every one, if he will reason a little, will range himself on the side of this paradox, and will see this strange idea gradually become an obvious truth. Every one will acknowledge that true religion must, at its first appearance among men, be saluted from all sides with that accusation of folly which Christianity has so loftily braved.

Let us leave to philosophers and physicians the task of exactly defining insanity. It has, at least, one constant characteristic, that it renders a man unfit for human life, taking life, in this instance, only in its essential conditions. The madman and the idiot do not really form a part of society, to which the weakest, the most ignorant, and I will almost say, the most savage of men are not permitted, in all the force of the term, to belong. Insanity, which in other respects has no connection with crime, must at least, have this in common with it, that it throws us violently out of the pale of humanity. It is a monstrosity in the sphere of intellect. But as the evidence of such monstrosity is to believe or see something which no man, rightly constituted, and healthy in body and mind, believes and sees,—since it is necessarily under such an aspect that insanity manifests itself,—it follows, that wherever this characteristic discovers itself, it awakens the idea of insanity. So that even a man who is not destitute of any of the conditions which compose our idea of humanity, is, nevertheless, for the want of a better term, designated a fool, when by his opinions he is found alone in the midst of his nation or his age: and if he meets with partisans, real or pretended, they share with him, so long as their number is small, the same title and the same disgrace.

Not only an opinion which all the world rejects, but a hope which no one shares, or a plan with which no one associates himself, brings the charge of folly before the multitude, against the rash man who has conceived it, and who cherishes it. His opinion may seem just, and his aim reasonable; he is a fool only for wishing to realize it. His folly lies in believing possible what all the world esteems impossible. Nay, he is a fool at a cheaper rate than even this. If, renouncing hope, he does not abandon desire; if he makes his happiness depend upon an end impossible to be attained, or an improvement impossible to be accomplished; if in the absence of a good which appears to him indispensable, of an ideal which has become, as it were, a part of his soul, he judges his life lost, and finds no relish in any of the joys which it offers to the rest of mankind, though in other respects he fulfil all the duties which his condition as a man imposes on him, the victim and sport of a fixed idea, he is a madman, at least with reference to that particular point; and the respect which others feel for him does not hinder them from pronouncing insane a grief which they do not understand.

They do not always apply to him this opprobrious epithet; but what they do not say, they think; what they do not proclaim, they permit to be seen. That man, they say, is not indeed a fool, but he has a foolish notion. For insanity is not necessarily a darkness in which the whole soul is enveloped; it is sometimes only a dark spot in a brilliant light. The shadows are more or less thick, more or less diffused. There are degrees of insanity; after all, it is insanity. We need not dispute about a term; and the world will ever call him foolish who desires to be wise all alone.

In other respects, indeed, the world is willing that one should be wise. It says so, at least; but it does not recognize any wisdom contrary to the opinion and practice of the majority. It honors principles; it is willing, indeed, that we should regulate ourselves by them; but it might be said, that it really knows none but the authority of numbers. At least numbers and also time are, in its eyes, so strong a presumption of truth, that it rarely gives itself the trouble to examine if one or a few individuals may not be right in opposition to all; and it appears as if it would compel the truth which has nothing in common with space and time, to derive itself entirely from space and time.

This prepossession is not without some foundation. It is not natural to suppose that truth was made to be the portion of a small number. It was a part, and the best part of the heritage of humanity; it was not to lie dormant for ages, to awaken at a given moment; nor to lose itself at a distance from the spirit of humanity, to be recovered in the thoughts of some favored individual. The truth, necessary to all, was to be within the reach of all, and present itself unceasingly to the mind of all. Such was the condition of truth, in the healthy, and regular condition of human nature. But those who derive truth from the opinion of the majority, either do not believe that man has departed from that primitive state, or they forget the fact; or, finally, they believe in the fall, without believing its principal consequences. They do not reflect that one of its first consequences must be the stupefaction of the moral sense, and the obscuration of our natural light. They do not consider that the knowledge which depends upon a certain state of the soul, changes with that very state, and that a conscience which has become dormant permits all kinds of error to enter the mind. They do not perceive, that our soul is not a mirror, in which truth is reflected by itself, but an opaque surface, on which it has always to be graven afresh; that, since the fall, faith is so little independent of the will, that, on the contrary, the will is a condition and an element of faith; that truth has no longer an irresistible evidence, nor, consequently, the power of making the same impressions on the minds of all, and subjecting them at once to its sway. On the other hand, they do not see that humanity, having been corrupted at its source, it is with great difficulty that certain elementary principles, necessary to the existence of society, are preserved, and still less, we must acknowledge it, preserved as true, as well as necessary. They do not remind themselves of the fact, that certain errors, adapted to all, have been able easily to enter the world by a door so poorly guarded as that of the heart, there to usurp authority, to establish themselves on a respectable footing, to become the rule of conduct and the test of morals. Will they deny that there have been universal errors? What will they say of slavery, that appalling evil, for which, during ages, no one had the slightest shame or remorse, which has not retired, except step by step, before the advancing light of Christianity, and which, O mournful condition of human nature! some civilized men, who believe in Jesus Christ, yet defend? When these errors come to be torn from the human mind, it is from the roots, it is forever; the conscience of humanity never restores any of its conquests. But such errors have reigned; ages have transmitted them intact and vital; and if universal consent is the seal of truth, they are as irrefragably true, as any of the truths which have universal consent for their basis. Are you surprised at this? Be appalled, but do not be surprised; for if the fall of man has not had these consequences, I am ignorant of what consequences it could have, and should be reduced to the necessity of deeming it a pure fiction, or of all truths the most insignificant and powerless.

Many reason upon this subject as if nothing had happened, since the day when God, looking upon his work, saw that what he had made was good. They speak of truth as if its condition amongst us were always the same. They love to represent it, enveloping and accompanying humanity, as the atmosphere envelops and accompanies our earth, in its journey through the heavens. But it is not so; truth is not attached to our mind, as the atmosphere to the globe we inhabit. Truth is a suppliant, who, standing before the threshold, is forever pressing towards the hearth, from which sin has banished it. As we pass and re-pass before that door, which it never quits, that majestic and mournful figure fixes for a moment our distracted attention. Each time it awakens in our memory I know not what dim recollections of order, glory, and happiness; but we pass, and the impression vanishes. We have not been able entirely to repudiate the truth; we still retain some unconnected fragments of it; what of its light our enfeebled eye can bear, what of it is proportioned to our condition. The rest we reject or disfigure, so as to render it difficult of recognition, while we retain,—which is one of our misfortunes—the names of things we no longer possess. Moral and social truth is like one of those monumental inscriptions* over which the whole community pass as they go to their business, and which every day become more and more defaced; until some friendly chisel is applied to deepen the lines in that worn-out stone, so that every one is forced to perceive and to read it. That chisel is in the hands of a small number of men, who perseveringly remain prostrate before that ancient inscription, at the risk of being dashed upon the pavement, and trampled under the heedless feet of the passers-by; in other words, this truth dropped into oblivion, that duty fallen into disuse, finds a witness in the person of some man who has not believed, without any other consideration, that all the world are right, simply and solely because it is all the world.

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* The monumental inscriptions here referred to, are supposed to be level with the ground.—T.

The strange things which that strange man says, and which some other repeats after him, will not fail to be believed sooner or later, and finally become the universal opinion. And why? Because truth is truth; because it corresponds to everything, satisfies everything; because, both in general and in detail, it is better adapted to us than error; because, bound up by the most intimate relations, with all the order in the universe, it has in our interests and wants a thousand involuntary advocates; because everything demands it, everything cries after it; because error exhausts and degrades itself; because falsehood, which at first appeared to benefit all, has ended by injuring all; so that truth sits down in its place, vacant, as it were, for the want of a suitable heir. Enemies concur with friends, obstacles with means, to the production of that unexpected result. Combinations of which it is impossible to give account, and of which God only has the secret, secure that victory. But conscience is not a stranger here; for there is within us, whatever we do, a witness to the truth, a witness timid and slow, but which a superior force drags from its retreat, and at last compels to speak. It is thus that truths the most combated, and, at first, sustained by organs the most despised, end by becoming, in their turn, popular convictions. This is our hope with reference to that truth which includes all truths, or in the bosom of which they are all formed anew. We firmly believe, conformably to the divine promise, that a time will come, when the gospel of Jesus Christ, if not loved by all, will at least be believed and professed by all.

This, however, does not prevent all such truths from being combated, and their first witnesses from passing for madmen. At the head of each of those movements which have promoted the elevation of the human race, what do you see? In the estimation of the world, madmen. And the contempt they have attracted by their folly, has always been proportioned to the grandeur of their enterprise, and the generosity of their intentions. The true heroes of humanity have always been crowned by that insulting epithet. And the man, who to-day in a pious enthusiasm, or yet more, to please the world, celebrates those men whose glory lies in having dared to displease the world, would, during their life, have perhaps been associated with their persecutors. He honors them, not because they are not worthy of honor, but because he sees them honored. His fathers have killed the prophets, and he their son, subdued by universal admiration, builds the tombs of the prophets.

The world demands,—and it is always by a forgetfulness of the condition into which we are fallen that it does so,—that truth should present itself with the advantage of simplicity and clearness. Many wish to make this a condition of truth; they wish to recognize it by this mark. That is all very well! But in order that it may appear simple, let us first have an eye simple like it. Is it the fault of truth, if our heart being divided, our intellect should be divided also, and that the axioms of man *innocent*, are the problems of man *fallen?* But without insisting on this reply, which may not perhaps be received by those who do not believe in the first fall, let us give another, which may be within view and reach of all. If we make clearness and simplicity the test of truth, we run the risk, in many cases, of embracing error instead of truth; for error, in most instances, has over truth the advantage of simplicity. Error, very often, has nothing to do but to suppress one of the elements of a question, to procure for it, by that arbitrary suppression, a similitude of unity. Every truth, in the actual condition of human nature, is composed of two terms, which must be harmonized, and which does not become truth in our minds, but by their reconciliation.* There are always

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* The reference here is obviously to that principle of the Baconian philosophy, so clearly developed in the Novum Organum, by which all facts and truths are to be investigated, on what Bacon calls their negative and affirmative sides. Things are often not what they seem. All questions have two aspects; and negative instances are uniformly to be reconciled to positive, in order that truth may be evolved and established. Take, for example, the principle or fact of gravitation, by which all bodies tend to their centre. This is proved by innumerable facts. But many things seem opposed to it, especially the fact that the heavenly bodies are actually thrown out from the centre of gravitation by the "centrifugal force," so that two opposing forces are constantly striving with each other. This constitutes the negative side of the question, and must be shown to be in harmony with the facts on the affirmative side. The earth revolves around the sun; but the sun appears to revolve around the earth; it seems to rise and set while the earth appears stationary. These facts must be harmonized, by reference to a single principle, or class of principles, in which they all unite.

In moral or spiritual truths, the fact under consideration is still more obvious. Is man a spiritual and immortal being? This is generally conceded, and the proof is satisfactory. But many facts seem opposed to it. For man sleeps, he decays, he loses his reason, he dies. This is the negative side of the question, and must be shown to be in harmony with the other, before the truth can be established. God is good and merciful. This is the affirmative side of a most important fact. But many things seem opposed to it, such as the universal ignorance and two elements to be reduced to a single one, either by the conciliation or the suppression of one of them. The first step towards the truth, is to recognize the existence of two elements; the second is to re-unite, without destroying them. Now, in what position in reference to these are the greater part of sincere and thoughtful men; or, to speak more properly, in what position is humanity? In the first; that is to say, it recognizes this duality. The human mind, in general, is not in that state of simplicity which some would make the characteristic and mark of truth. Who, then, will ap-

wretchedness of man, the apparent disorders in the natural and moral worlds, which are permitted, if not inflicted, by the Divine Being. The two sides of the question, then, must be reconciled, by the intervention of some other principle or fact, such as the justice of God, the free-agency of man, or the indissoluble connection between sin and misery. This duality of truth, if it may be so called, is, if possible, still more obvious in revelation. It is affirmed, for example, that Jesus Christ is God; but he is also spoken of as a man, with all the feelings and infirmities of man. He loves, he suffers, he dies. In one case he acts the sovereign, in another the servant. Now he wields the energies of omnipotence. Anon he groans beneath the pressure of calamity. Now he lies in the grave guarded by Roman soldiers, then he breaks the bands of death, and ascends "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." Where, then, is the fact, the consideration, or the principle, which must harmonize these two classes of opposing facts, the negative and positive sides of the problem relative to the mystery of Christ? Is it not found in the fact, that Jesus is both God and man, or, as the New Testament expresses it, "God manifest in the flesh?" If this can be shown, then the two terms of the question are reconciled, and the truth in the case is established.

In the higher philosophy, we see the same duality appearing, in a more precise and striking form. The questions pertaining to subject and object matter and mind, finite and infinite, absolute and conditioned, God and the universe, are all to be resolved by the "conciliation of apparent contradictions."—T.

propriate to themselves this mark and characteristic? Those, doubtless, who will rid themselves of one of the elements of the question, or one of the parts of the truth, that they may occupy their attention only with one. Hence, it is their opinion only which will appear simple; and, in a certain sense, it will be so in reality. And since this simplicity flatters at once the indolence and impatience of the human mind, and since, on the other hand, the mind ever carries within it the sentiment that there is no truth but in unity, man, dazzled with that false and artificial unity, will eagerly abandon himself to opinions which present it to him, and will maintain them until constrained to acknowledge their falseness in their consequences, which violate at once his own nature, and the nature of things.

What has given success to the most pernicious errors, whether in matters of religion or social order? Their great air of simplicity. What has been alleged in their favor? Common sense. The vulgar, the whole world, indeed, permits itself to be caught by this bait. But human life obstinately refuses to settle down upon such a basis. Common opinion originates no doctrine with which man can remain satisfied. The ideas to which he is obliged to remount in order to give dignity to his life, possess much more the character of paradoxes than of common sense notions. Doubtless, there was a time when man obtained them by immediate intuition, and not through the intervention of reflection; because such ideas were not distinguished from his very existence.* But that time is no more; the pure light is broken in the prism of sin; the power of collect-ing the scattered rays is not within us; and common sense has not filled the place of intuition. If man yet accomplishes great and sublime things in the world, it is not under the inspiration of common opinion, but under some glimmering of primitive light; nor is it to common opinion they are ascribed, for it is in its name they are condemned. In the eyes of the mass, self-denial, humility and martyrdom are not common sense.

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* They formed a part of himself. He acted upon them naturally and spontaneously. His mind was clear, and his heart innocent.—T.

Thus have I called attention to a fact, and given an explanation of it. It is, that a general contempt has often covered those who have recalled to the notice of men some principle of eternal rectitude, some truth essential to the elevation of human nature; and the explanation I have given of it is, the fall. Let us, if you please, for the present, leave the explanation, and confine ourselves to the fact. We ask only that it be affirmed or denied. But we can scarcely believe that any one will deny it. For, that certain individual opinions, which have subsequently become universal, have caused their first partisans to be treated as madmen or criminals, who can wish to dispute? And yet to maintain that these opinions, now become universal, were, after all, errors, would argue a disposition of mind, and even a state of moral feeling, which we are not permitted to anticipate. I remind you only that torture, slavery, the degradation of the female sex, and compulsion in matters of religion, have existed amongst us as truths of public recognition, and almost as articles of faith; and that there is a country, where the man who should wish to prevent widows from burning themselves with the dead bodies of their husbands, would be considered a madman or an infidel. Suppose, then, that the fact in question is admitted by all our readers; let us occupy ourselves only with appreciating its nature.

If the defenders of the most necessary, and, in the present day, the most evident truths, have, in all epochs and in all countries, gone by the name of fools; if they have been hated, despised, and persecuted; if the truth of which they were the messengers has not penetrated, except slowly, and by a sanguinary road, into common opinion, laws, and manners; if it had to submit to that exile of ages in order to reach, as we have said, from the threshold to the hearth, what, we ask, is the condition of truth on the earth, and the position of man with reference to it? We say nothing of the fall; let us admit that man has not fallen; let us not ask what he might have been formerly; let us look only at what he is at present, that is, since the remotest era to which we can go back by the aid of historical monuments. What is the disposition of a being respecting the truth who at first rejects it; who despises those who proclaim it; who, when he accepts it, submits to it rather than accepts it; who receives it only by little and little, and in a shattered and fragmentary state; who finally attaches himself to it, I acknowledge, and does not abandon it, but, like a husband who, during long years, has shown himself stupidly insensible to the virtues of his wife, and finally yields only to the inconceivable obstinacy of a patience and an affection almost superhuman.

That effort, that sanguinary struggle, with which humanity, wrestling, so to speak, against itself, seizes, one by one, the most necessary truths; the bad grace with which it is done, and the incapacity of not doing otherwise, indicate two things at once; the first, that man cannot do without the truth; the second, that he is not in fellowship with the truth. But truth is one; and all those truths successively discovered are only parts, or diverse applications of it. All the truths which are sometimes called principles are the consequences of a first principle. That principle includes all, unites all; it is from this source they derive their evidence, their life, their immortality. That principle is the first truth which must be honored, the first light that must be kindled. It will itself kindle all extinguished truths, shed over them an equal radiance, and nourish all their scattered lamps with a divine oil, the source of which is inexhaustible, because it is divine. We must have a key to all problems, a primary idea, by means of which all else may be known; truth is one, because man is one; it is one, or it is nothing.

We here say nothing new. This is the very idea which the human mind has best preserved of its ancient heritage. It has always endeavored to attach all its thoughts, all its life, to one grand and unique principle. This effort has given birth to all religions; for that essential principle could be nothing but God; and the great question at issue has been to form an idea of God. But man has never failed to make God after his own image, and his various religions have never surpassed himself; for if by these he imposes on himself acts and privations which he would not otherwise impose, such toils being of his own choice, do not raise him above himself. Hence these religions do not change the principle of his inner life; they subject him to an external sway, only to leave him free at heart; in a word, they do not substitute the new man for the old. And since they take man at a given point in space and duration, they are necessarily temporary, and retire before a new degree of culture and a new form of civilization. But at their first appearance, however absurd they may be, they are by no means taxed with folly; because they are only a form given to the moral condition of all,—a form which is itself the result of time, place, and traditions; it is born and grows up with the people; it is itself as appropriate and natural as their manners; and they will take care not to accuse of extravagance their own work, and their own thought.'

But let a doctrine present itself, which, so far from being formed in the image of man as he is, appears, on the contrary, formed in the image of man as he is not; a doctrine which compels man to surpass himself, and which changes the character, not of a particular class, or of a single energy or faculty, but of the entire human life; a doctrine which places the object of humanity higher than it is placed by any individual, or by mankind generally, how, think you, will it be received? What! will the particular applications of the principle cost those who proposed it contempt and insult, and the very principle of all these applications, that which includes them all, and discovers many others like them, not bring upon its defenders insult and contempt? What! hate the consequences! and yet not hate the principle which sanctions them, enforces them, and will continually give rise to others of a similar kind? We do not think so. That principle will not escape hatred, unless by contempt, or rather it will suffer both by turns; the hatred of those who cannot help suspecting its truth; the contempt of others who, looking on it only as a prejudice different from their own, will not believe it formidable enough to deserve their hatred. Let us rather say, that both of them will be forced to regard it as a folly. For what is that principle, which has created, so to speak, another human nature? It cannot be an abstraction; it must be a fact. It must be a fact of a new order, because ordinary facts would leave us in our ordinary condition. It is, then, a divine fact; for to God only does it belong to create a fact of a new order. Hence it is a fact which we could not foresee. And since we could not foresee it, we cannot comprehend it. It is not a natural but a supernatural fact; it is a miracle; it is a folly. Indeed, it is not a religion such as that which man makes for himself. True religion is a revelation of God; and if God has spoken, what he has said is necessarily a folly to those who do not believe. Those, too, who convey this revelation, or relate this fact, or announce this message, will excite in the world an immense surprise; will revolt the wise, alarm the timid, irritate the powerful. They will see let loose against them the ignorant as well as the wise; for it is not necessary to be learned in order to discern folly. As to the effects which this fact has produced upon them, and the internal revolution they have undergone, if they speak of them, they will not be believed; their most certain experiences will appear but as vain fancies. And since the world do not comprehend their principles, neither will they comprehend their conduct; they will complain of them as enthusiasts; they will ridicule them as mystics, until that power of truth, of which we have spoken, has acted upon the most rebellious spirits, subdued contempt, and finally forced the wisest to confess and to bless that folly.

The history I have just recounted is that of the gospel. Christian truth, simply because it was the truth, must, at its first appearance, have had all the world against it. It has become, externally, the religion of nations; and governments have done themselves the honor to protect it, or to be protected by it. It would, indeed, be difficult to say, with precision, what the nations have adopted under the name of the Christian religion. They never believe with the same faith as individuals. A nation has its manner of being Christian, just as an individual has his. One must be a Christian according to the standard of the world, not to be a fool in its judgment. The world has abstracted from Christianity a part of its folly; it has rendered it almost wise, at least, in practice; so that, even in the midst of a Christian nation, the Christian who accepts all that folly, passes for a foolish man. It is not, then, necessary to go amongst the Mussulmans, or the followers of Budh, to hear ourselves denominated insane on account of Christianity; the occasion will never be wanting in Christendom, and even in the bosom of a people the most attached to the worship of their fathers. The folly of the cross will always spring from the book of the gospel; it will always break out in the profession and conduct of those who have accepted it earnestly and without restriction. The Christian, consequently, will always be tempted to dissemble his faith; and it will therefore ever be one of his duties to brave popular contempt, and confess himself tainted with that sublime folly.

But if any one supposes that the whole matter at issue turns on confessing his faith in Christ once for all, he is greatly mistaken. Christianity is something more than an assemblage of dogmas; it is especially the principle of a new life. The folly of the Christian does not always consist in the doctrines he adopts. It consists more, much more, in the maxims which serve to regulate his conduct. He is foolish in practice, as well as in theory. He separates himself from other men in a thousand ways, the greater part of which, I allow, are not visible, but remain secret between himself and God. But it is impossible that this separation should not sometimes be obvious and public ; if he does not seek occasions for it, it is certain he will not avoid them. The same Christianity which teaches him maxims inconceivable to the rest of the world, teaches him to follow them without fear or dissimulation. Such courage is the first law and the first mark of a true Christian. Every Christian is, first of all, a witness ; every witness is, by anticipation, a martyr.

Christianity has effected this revolution in the world. It has given to truth a dignity independent of time and numbers. It has required that truth should be believed and respected for itself. It has claimed that every one should be able to judge of its merits ; that the most ignorant and the most isolated should find in himself sufficient reasons to believe ; that in order to decide regarding it, he should not inquire if others around him believe it, but that he should be ready, when occasion requires, to be alone in his opinion, and to persist in it. So many men make no use of their conscience ; so many who practise a duty would not even suspect that it was a duty, if they found that opinion prevalent ; so many who have no doubt respecting a duty do not expect to recognize and discharge it until they see it performed by those of their fellow-men in whom they have the greatest confidence ! They believe so much in man, so much in numbers, so much in antiquity, and so little in truth ! But Christianity was designed to produce a race of men who should believe in truth, not in numbers, nor in years, nor in force,—men, consequently, who should be ready to pass for fools.

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O, then, let us daily ask God to form around us an immense void, in which we shall see nothing but Him, —a profound silence, in which we shall hear nothing but Him! Let us beseech Him to raise our souls to an elevation, where fear of the judgments of the world shall not reach us; where the world itself shall disappear and sink away beneath! Let us entreat Him to envelop us in his radiance, and inspire us with the holy folly of his gospel, and especially, to penetrate our souls with a love "to him that hath loved us," so intense and dominant, that it would cost us more to descend from that height to the world, than it has cost us to ascend thither from the world. Let us not only pray without ceasing, but let us unceasingly watch, unceasingly strive;—no means, no effort is too much to disengage us from the restraints of worldly wisdom, to make us die to that vain wisdom, and enable us to taste, in the bosom of God, the plenitude of truth, and the plenitude of life.

A CHARACTERISTIC OF THE GOSPEL.

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."—Rev. xiv. 6.

Among sceptics who resist with the greatest pertinacity the arguments of the defenders of Christianity, there are none, doubtless, who would not be ready to declare, that a sensible proof, an authentic miracle, would not find them incorrigible. Show us, they will say to you, what St. John is said to have seen, "an angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people," and we shall be converted. This is to promise what is beyond their power; miracles do not convert; the sight of them can only convince the understanding, the heart needs that demonstration of power which belongs only to the Spirit of God. But if miracles, clear and well-attested, are capable of producing on the mind an impression which predisposes it to receive the message of salvation, let sceptics cease to demand the vision of St. John; they nave something of still greater value; that vision is an image of which they have the reality. They can, as well as St. John, and in some sense, better than he, see that angel who bears through the heavens the everlasting gospel to those that dwell on the earth.

I mean, that they can discover in Christianity a character of perpetuity and universality, as striking at least to the reason, as the sight of an angel flying in the expanse of heaven, would be to the eyes and the imagination. If they require a miracle, here is one. For to what will they give the name of a miracle, if they refuse it to a fact unique in its kind, inconceivable in its production, contrary to all probabilities, inaccessible to all induction, and which, before seeing it realized, every one would have judged impossible? Let them lend us such attention as the subject demands, and we shall hope that the facts we are about to present will make such an impression on them, as will induce them to extend their investigations, and inform themselves more thoroughly respecting the gospel.

This is the question we propose for discussion. Is it in the nature of things that a doctrine, the principal ideas of which are not susceptible of being proved, still less discovered by mere reason, should live in all times, and be introduced among all nations; and not only so, but should become, in all times and in all nations, the vivifying principle of morality, and the beneficent auxiliary of the progress of the human mind?

Have the goodness to reply; but recollect, that the examples you shall cite must want none of the conditions enumerated in my question. The doctrine under consideration is one which can neither be demonstrated, nor discovered by reason. It is one capable of embracing all times and all nations. It is one which takes the principal direction of the conduct of those who embrace it. It is one favorable to the progress of the human mind, and the onward march of civilization;—four conditions, each of which is essential.

I see, indeed, a doctrine common to all times, and all nations, that of the existence of God, and the immortality of the soul; two inseparable truths, the union of which forms what is called *natural religion.* It is natural, in fact, because nature appears everywhere to have taught its elements to the human soul. It is everywhere one of the first products of reason, one of the first results of its intellectual activity. It is the conclusion of a reasoning so simple and so rapid, that the reasoning, so to speak, disappears, and the soul appears to obtain it by intuition. It is universal, if you please, because it is natural. It is not, however, a natural, but a positive religion, in which we demand this character of universality.* As soon as natural religion professes to clothe itself in determined forms, unanimity ceases, no human power can establish it. Natural religion, the instant it becomes positive, ceases to be capable of being the religion of the human race.†

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* By a positive religion, the author means one which is clothed in set forms, which consists of specific articles,—or what, in theological phrase, is sometimes called *dogmatic.*

† When Robespierre, who, with all his enormities, had some political sagacity, saw the havoc which atheism was working in France, he induced the Convention, which had abolished all forms of religion, to restore the doctrines of the existence of a Supreme Being, and of the immortality of the soul. The reign of absolute infidelity, and the worship of reason; in the person of a beautiful but lewd woman, brought from one of the brothels of Paris, was of short duration. But deism, in a positive form, could not be established by all the efforts of the government, backed by the philosophers. The theophilanthropists, as they called themselves, aided by the public funds, opened some fifteen or twenty churches, delivered orations, and sang hymns, in honor of the Deity, and the immortality of the soul, but the attendance became less and less, and the interest, even of those who were most enthusiastic in the project, gradually declined. So that, by the end of 1795, scarcely a vestige of an organized system of religious belief and worship remained

But it will be said, if a positive religion cannot be universal, at least it may regain on the side of time what it loses on the side of space. Suppose this granted; but it must be acknowledged, that it is only half of the condition we have proposed. We have not spoken of all times only, but of all places; so that after we have been shown a positive religion, mistress of a corner of the globe, from the origin of the world till now, we should have a right to reject such an example. We accept it, nevertheless, by way of accommodation, and for want of a better. There are religious doctrines of an amazing antiquity. With some variations in the details, the elementary principles are permanent, and these appear unchangeable, as the physical constitution of the nation that professes them, immovable as the soil that bears them. If they are destitute of universality, perpetuity ought, in a certain sense, to be accorded to them. But are they competent, as I have required, to serve as a moral force; and are they favorable to the natural and progressive development of the human race? No; some of them have no harmony with life; others pervert the heart, and the social relations; and all of them chain the mind in immovable forms. All present the phenomenon of a people, who, surprised, as one might believe, by a sudden congelation, preserve in the most advanced periods of their existence, the attitude, manners, opinions, costume, institutions, language, in a word, the whole manner of life, in the midst of which they were seized by that sudden catalepsy. If, on the

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in France. The whole scheme was abandoned as hopeless. No! Deism cannot be established as a positive religion. It fails to meet the wants of the human soul; it gives no assurance of the divine favor, and supplies no pledge of a blessed immortality.—T.

other hand, any one claims that it is the spirit of the people that has determined their faith, and that their manners have made their religion, then this religion is not such as we have required, namely, a doctrine capable of influencing the life, and determining the conduct.

In going over the different known religions which divide the nations, we shall find none that meets all the conditions we have laid down. Mohammedism, besides owing its progress to the power of the sword, fails to favor the progressive advancement of the human mind, nay more, represses it. It is not suited to penetrate into all countries, because it necessarily carries along with it polygamy and despotism, antagonisms of civilization. The religion of Hindostan fails to be moral, and is unfavorable to culture and liberty; everywhere it would need its own earth and sky, for which alone it is made. Universality is equally wanting to the Jewish religion; for it does not desire it, nay more, repels it. It is a religion entirely national and local; beyond Palestine it is exiled. The deficiency which exists in all the religions we have just named, exists also in all others. They want universality, perpetuity, morality, and sympathy with progress.

Such already is the answer to the question we have proposed; for no positive religion is found which has united all the conditions enumerated. We may say, with some degree of confidence, that such a thing is not possible. If it were, would it not have happened? And if it has not happened, will it ever happen?

But even in consulting the nature of things, independent of the teachings of history, the same answer will be obtained. No man can give a religion to humanity. If natural religion be referred to, it is nature that gives it ; and all that a man can do is to give form to its dogmas, by reducing its teachings to order ; he can only restore to humanity what he has received from it. But, is it a positive religion which is referred to ; one, I mean, the dogmas of which human reason could not, of itself, have discovered ? Then, I ask, what elevation of heart, of imagination, of reason, what stretch of genius, what wondrous divination, are supposed to belong to a man, to admit that the dogmas of his invention, the dogmas which nature has not given, shall be received in all countries, shall preserve their adaptation in all times, shall be applicable to all the conditions of humanity and of society, in a word, shall be able to constitute, and shall actually constitute, the religion of the human race !

It is with some degree of inconsiderateness that some men are spoken of as advancing beyond their age, and impressing their own individual character upon generations. These are, most of the time, men who have, better than others, understood, reduced into forms more precise, and expressed with greater energy, the dominant opinions of their era. They have proved what their age carried in its bosom. They have concentrated, in the burning-glass of their genius, the rays of truth, which, scattered in the world, have not yet been able to set it on fire. But their genius, the faithful and powerful expression of a time and a country which have made them what they are, cannot be as vast as the genius of humanity. Men have done the work of men, partial, relative, limited. But let an individual, isolating himself from his country, from his time, nay more, from his individuality, divine the fact, the idea, the doctrine which shall renew, convert, and vivify mankind in all times and in all places,—such an one is not a man, he is a God!

Observe particularly that I do not require that his religion shall become, in fact, the religion of all times, of all places, and of all men. In the first instance, he must have time to establish it; and we do not claim that at the beginning of its career it shall conquer the whole world. Further, we have not all time before us; and inasmuch as the future fate of the world cannot be fully ascertained, we are not able to say with precision that a thing is of all time. Finally, all true religion supposes freedom, and freedom supposes the possibility of resistance on the part of individuals. We shall demand only, and the matter must be thoroughly understood, that a sufficient number of experiments have proved that the doctrine in question is such that no climate, no degree of culture, no form of politics, no circumstances of time or place, no physical or moral constitution, are a barrier to it, a fatal limit which it cannot pass; or, to express ourselves more briefly, that it correspond to the universal and permanent wants of humanity, independent of all accidental, temporary, and local circumstances.

If there is a religion of God upon the earth, it ought to have this character of universality and perpetuity. For who can doubt that the love of God embraces all mankind; or suppose that he could not speak to all mankind? In such a case, God cannot have in view one time, one country, one people only, but all who possess the heart of humanity. When he speaks, it is for the whole human race. Should it please him to distinguish one nation among the nations of the earth, it would yet be for the sake of the human family. What he might say to that people in particular would not have an infinite and eternal range; that alone would be invested with such a character, which, through that separate nation, would be addressed to universal humanity. His revelation would not constitute the fleeting existence of one nation, except, by this means, to form a people taken out of all the nations of the earth, a spiritual people, a nation of holy souls.

We return, then, to the proposition, and say: If such a religion exists, it must be from God. It is on this ground, that is to say, its universality, that we have already acknowledged natural religion to be from him. But if, besides natural religion, there is in the world a positive religion, invested with the character we have in view, we maintain that it is also from God. Because it belongs to God alone to form an adequate conception of man, whom he has made, and meet the wants of his entire nature; because, in consequence of this, God only knows how to speak to man; because he is confined to no places, and restricted by no circumstances. And if the arbitrary appearance of the principles of a positive religion arrests our attention, let us reflect that what is necessary for God, and a consequence of his nature, may very well appear arbitrary to us; and that what is strange and unexpected in his revelations, is not less the necessary and indispensable result of his perfections, the faithful and spontaneous imprint of his character and relations to the world.

Let us, then, hold for certain, that if there is in the world a positive religion, which, fitted to control the life, and favorable to the progressive advancement of the human mind, finds no limits in any circumstances of time and place, such a religion is from God.

This being settled, let us inquire, if there is such a religion.

A little more than eighteen hundred years ago, a man appeared in an obscure corner of the world. I do not say, that a long succession of predictions had announced the advent of this man; that a long train of miracles had marked, with a divine seal, the nation from which he was to spring, and the word itself which announced him; that from the heights of a far distant future he had projected his shadow to the feet of our first parents exiled from Paradise; in a word, that he was encircled and authenticated by an imposing array of proofs. I only say that he preached a religion. It is not natural religion;—the doctrines of the existence of God and the immortality of the soul are everywhere taken for granted in his words, but never proved. It does not consist of ideas deduced from the primitive concessions of reason. What he teaches, what forms the foundation and essence of his system, are things which confound reason; things to which reason can find no access. It proclaims a God upon earth, a God man, a God poor, a God crucified. It proclaims vengeance overwhelming the innocent, pardon raising the guilty from the deepest condemnation, God himself the victim of man, and man forming one and the same person with God. It proclaims a new birth, without which man cannot be saved. It proclaims the sovereignty of the grace of God, and the entire freedom of man.*

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* When our author speaks of God as a victim, and subjected to suffering, he must always be understood as referring to God manifest in the flesh, that is, to Jesus Christ in his whole nature as human and divine. Some, I know, object to such expressions as those in the text, as being unphilosophical and unscriptural. But in this they may be mis-

I do not soften its teachings. I present them in their naked form. I seek not to justify them. No,—you can, if you will, be astonished and alarmed at these strange dogmas;—do not spare yourselves in this particular. But when you have wondered sufficiently at their strangeness, I shall present another thing for your astonishment. These strange doctrines have conquered the world! Scarcely made known in poor Judea, they took possession of learned Athens, gorgeous Corinth, and proud Rome. They found confessors in shops, in prisons, and in schools, on tribunals and on thrones. Vanquishers of civilization, they triumphed over barbarism. They caused to pass under the same yoke the degraded Roman and the savage Scandinavian. The forms of social life have changed,—society has been dissolved and renewed,—these have endured. Nay more,

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taken. Our philosophy of the divine nature is exceedingly shallow and imperfect. God is not the cold and impassive Being which it too often represents him. Perfect and ever blessed he certainly is; but that he is incapable of everything like sentiment or emotion, is exceedingly questionable. Such is not the view given of him in the Scriptures. Are we not expressly informed that the Word was made flesh, that he might suffer death for every man, and that it behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren? If he suffered at all, did not his whole being suffer? Was there not a profound and mysterious sympathy between his human and his divine natures? How else can we account for the infinite value and efficacy attached to his sufferings and death? How else explain the adoring reverence of the primitive church in view of his agony in the garden and on the cross? Besides, suffering is by no means an evidence of imperfection; nay, the experience of it may be necessary to the highest felicity, on the part even of pure and perfect natures. In this respect the sinless and adorable Saviour was made perfect through sufferings, as much, perhaps, for his own sake as for ours. But this is a subject which philosophy does not understand; and we can only say devoutly, "Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh!"—T.

the church which professed them, has endeavored to diminish their power, by beginning to corrupt their purity. Mistress of traditions and depositary of knowledge, she has used her advantages against the doctrines she ought to have defended; but they have endured. Everywhere, and at all times, in cottages and in palaces, have they found souls to whom a Redeemer was precious and regeneration necessary. Moreover, no other system, philosophical or religious, has endured. Each made its own era, and each era had its own idea; and, as a celebrated writer has developed it, the religious sentiment, left to itself, selected forms adapted to the time, which it broke to pieces when that time had passed away. But the doctrine of the cross continued to reappear. If it had been embraced only by one class of persons, that even were much, that perhaps were inexplicable; but you find the followers of the cross among soldiers and citizens, among the rich and the poor, the bold and the timid, the wise and the ignorant. This doctrine is adapted to all, everywhere, and in all times. It never grows old. Those who embrace it never find themselves behind their age; they understand it, they are understood by it; they advance with it and aid its progress. The religion of the cross appears nowhere disproportionate to civilization. On the contrary, civilization advances in vain; it always finds Christianity before it.

Do not suppose that Christianity, in order to place itself in harmony with the age, will complacently leave out a single idea. It is from its inflexibility that it is strong; it has no need to give up anything in order to be in harmony with whatever is beautiful, legitimate and true; for Christianity is itself the type of perfection.

It is the same to-day as in the time of the Reformers, in the time of the Fathers of the church, in the time of the Apostles and of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless it is not a religion which flatters the natural man; and worldlings, in keeping at a distance from it, furnish sufficient evidence that Christianity is a system foreign to their natures. Those who dare not reject it, are forced to soften it down. They divest it of its barbarisms, its *myths*, as they are pleased to call them; they render it even reasonable,—but, strange to say, when it is reasonable, it has no power; and in this, is like one of the most wonderful creatures in the animal world, which, when it loses its sting, dies. Zeal, fervor, holiness, and love disappear with these strange doctrines; the salt has lost its savor, and none can tell how to restore it. But, on the other hand, do you not, in general, perceive when there is a revival of these doctrines, Christianity is inspired with new life, faith is reanimated and zeal abounds? Do not ask, Upon what soil, or in what system, must grow these precious plants? You can reply in advance, that it is only in the rude and rough soil of orthodoxy, under the shadow of those mysteries which confound human reason, and from which it loves to remove as far as possible.

This, then, among all religions, is the only one which is eternally young. But perhaps physical nature will do what moral nature cannot. Perhaps climates will arrest that angel which carries the everlasting gospel through the heavens. Perhaps a certain corporeal organization may be necessary for the reception of the truth. But you may pass with it from Europe to Africa, from Ethiopia to Greenland, from the Atlantic to the Southern sea. Everywhere will this message be heard; everywhere fill an acknowledged void; everywhere perfect and renew the life. The soul of the negro slave receives from it the same impressions as the soul of Isaac Newton. The lofty intelligence of the one and the stupidity of the other have, at least, one great thought in common. And let it be well remarked, the effects are everywhere the same. The cross sheds a light that illumines all. As if by instinct, not by painful reasoning, they reach, everywhere, the same conclusions, recognize the same duties, and, in different forms, commence the same life. Wherever Christianity is introduced, civilized man draws nearer to nature, while the savage rises towards civilization; each in his turn, and in an inverse sense, makes some steps towards a common centre, which is that of true sociability and true civilization.

It will, perhaps, be objected, that this civilizing power of Christianity is found only in the sublime morality of the gospel; and that it is not by the positive doctrines, but rather in spite of them, that savages are converted, and then civilized. This assertion is false in whatever aspect it may be viewed.

In readily conceding to the evangelical morality a decided superiority to all other systems of morals, we wish it to be observed, that this superiority holds less with reference to the precepts, than their basis or motives; in other words, the mysterious and divine facts which distinguish Christianity as a positive religion. The gospel has not invented morality; many of its finest maxims were, for a long time previous, in circulation in the world. The gospel has not so much promulged them, as placed them on a new foundation, and quickened them by a new spirit. The glory of the gospel consists less in announcing a new morality, than in giving power to practise the old.

But let us not dispute. We admit that the morality of the gospel contains many things absolutely new; but it must be conceded that there was in the world, and particularly in the writings of the ancient sages, as fine a morality; and that, if morality has a power within itself, an intrinsic virtue, we should expect to see practice in some proportion to theory. But in former times, now, and always, in each man, and in humanity generally, we are struck with a singular disparity between principles and conduct; and are constrained to acknowledge, that in this sphere, at least, what is done responds poorly to what is known; and that the life by no means harmonizes with convictions. The knowledge of morality is not morality; and the science of duty is not the practice of duty.

These general remarks are fully confirmed by the history of the evangelization of the heathen. If one fact is known and acknowledged, it is that it has never been by the preaching of morality,—not even of evangelical morality,—that their hearts have been gained. Nay, it is not more so by the teaching of natural religion. Pious Christians, deceiving themselves on this point, wished to conduct the people of Greenland methodically by natural to revealed religion. As long as they rested in these first elements, their preaching did not affect, did not gain a single soul; but the moment that, casting away their human method, they decided to follow that of Christ and of God, the barriers fell before them, and once more the folly of the cross was found to be wiser than the wisdom of man. The schools teach us to proceed from the known to the unknown, from the simple to the composite; but in the kingdom of God, things occur which derange all our ideas. There we must begin at once with the unknown, the composite, the extraordinary. It is from revealed religion that man ascends to natural religion. He is transported at a single bound into the centre of mysteries. He is shown God incarnate—the God man crucified, before he is shown God in glory. He is shown the system before the details, the end before the beginning. Do you wish to know why? It is that the true road to knowledge in religion is not from God to man, but from man to God; that before knowing himself he cannot know God; that the view of his misery, and of his sins, conducts him to the atonement, and the atonement reveals to him, in their fulness, the perfections of his Creator. It is, to repeat the celebrated saying of Augustine, that "man must descend into the hell of his own heart, before he can ascend to the heaven of God." The Christian religion is not merely the knowledge of God, but the knowledge of the relations of man with God. It is the view of these relations which sheds the most light upon the character and attributes of God himself. And hence it is quite correct to say that revealed religion, which is precisely the discovery of these relations, conducts to natural religion, namely, to that which is more elementary, to the idea of the infinite, whence natural religion is derived, to religious feeling and the conceptions which are called natural, but which ought to be called supernatural. These are, ordinarily, but little familiar, seldom present, and not altogether natural to our minds. In fact, how many men has the gospel taken from the depths of materialism, and conducted, by the way of Christian doctrine, to a belief in the existence of God, and the immortality of the soul.*

It is, then, the doctrines, the mysteries, the paradoxes of the gospel, we must carry to the savage, if we would gain his heart to natural religion, from which he is estranged, and to pure morality, of which he knows still less. But even if our adversaries could reverse all this, they would not the less remain under the pressure of an overwhelming difficulty. If natural religion and morality suffice to make converts, will they not suffice also to make preachers? Find us, among those who do not believe in the positive doctrines of Christianity, men disposed to undertake that laborious and dangerous mission. Come, let the philosophers and rationalists bestir themselves; let us see their faith by their works; let their zeal serve to prove, to corroborate their system; let them, from love of morality and natural religion, quit parents, friends, fortunes, habits, plunge into ancient forests, traverse burning plains of sand, brave the influences of a deadly climate, in order to reach, convert and save some souls! Might they not do for the kingdom of God half of what so many courageous travellers have done and suffered for science, or the temporal prosperity of their country? What! no one stir! no one even feel! This appeal has not moved a single soul of those friends of religion and morality, for whom the cross is folly! Why, it would appear that they had no love for God, no care for souls, none of the pious proselytism found among the partisans of the strange doctrines of the fall of man, a bloody expiation, and a new birth! My brethren, does this evidence satisfy you, and do you believe that there can be any other means, than by these doctrines, of establishing the kingdom of God on the earth? Thus Christianity is clearly the positive religion, which combines all the conditions enumerated in our question.

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* The following, taken from the Biblical Repository, Vol. i., second series, p. 383, is a striking illustration of what our author asserts:—

"Francis Junius, whom, at his death, it was remarked by Scaliger, the whole world lamented as its instructor, was recovered from atheism, in a remarkable manner, by simply perusing St. John i. 1–5. Persuaded by his father to read the New Testament, 'At first sight,' he says, 'I fell unexpectedly on that august chapter of St. John the evangelist, "In the beginning was the Word," &c. I read part of the chapter, and was so struck with what I read, that I instantly perceived the divinity of the subject, and the authority and majesty of the Scripture to surpass greatly all human eloquence. I shuddered in my body, my mind was confounded, and I was so strongly affected all that day, that I hardly knew who I myself was; but thou, Lord my God, didst remember me in thy boundless mercy, and receive me, a lost sheep, into thy fold.'"

These are not arguments we present to the adversaries of Christianity; they are facts. They have only to recognize this striking characteristic of Christianity, to see, with us, that angel who flies through the heavens, having the everlasting gospel to preach to all that dwell upon the earth, and to every tribe, and tongue, and people. These are facts which we claim to offer them. If they are false, let them be proved so. If they are true, let any one dispute the conclusion, if he can. Let him explain by natural causes, a phenomenon unique in its kind. Let him assign, if he can, a limit to that power, that influence of Christianity. But will any one give himself the trouble of doing this? In truth, it is more easy to shut the eyes, and, repeating with confidence some hearsays, to assure us that, according to the best information, Christianity has gone by; that it has had its era to make, and has made it,—its part to play, and has played it; and that "the only homage we can render it now, is to throw flowers upon its tomb." This tomb would be that of the human race. Christianity yet preserves the world from the wrath of God. It is, perhaps, with a view to its propagation, that events are pressing onward, and that nations are agitated with a fearful crisis. Shall a few sceptics, with frivolous hearts, give the lie to the most high God, and the immense pressure of circumstances prove a false standard of providence? Let us pray for the progress of the everlasting gospel, and the conversion of those proud spirits who, till now, have disdained to recognize it. Let us pray that it may constantly become more precious to ourselves, and that its laws may be as sacred as its promises are sweet.

NATURAL FAITH.

"Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."—John xx. 29.

The apostles did not profess to convey to the world anything but a message, good news, the news of that fact which the angels announced to the shepherds of Bethelehem, in these words: "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace, good-will to men!" Faithful, but not indifferent messengers, deeply moved themselves, by the good news they carried to the world, they spoke of it with all the warmth of joy and love. Preachers of righteousness, they urged with force, the practical consequences of the facts they announced, and in their admirable instructions, a leading sentiment, gratitude, was expanded into a multitude of duties and virtues, the combination of which forms the purest morality. But at this point, their ministry terminated; and certainly they made no pretension of introducing a new philosophy into the world. Nevertheless, they have done so, and those who, in modern times, devote themselves to ascertain what ideas are concealed under the great facts of the gospel, to penetrate into its spirit, and, if we may so express ourselves, construct the system of it, cannot refrain from admiration, while reflecting on the connection of parts in that great whole, their per fect harmony with one another, and the harmony of each, with the permanent characteristics and inextinguishable wants of human nature. This philosophical character of the gospel would have been striking, even if the apostles had appeared to impress it voluntarily upon their instructions; but how much more is this the case, and how well fitted to make us perceive the divinity of the gospel, when we see that its writers had no consciousness of the fact, and that it was in spite of themselves, so to speak, that it was stamped upon their work! This philosophical character would have been striking even in a simple religion, one apparently rational, approaching, in a word, to natural religion, as much as a positive one can; but how much more striking it is, when we consider that this religion is a complete tissue of strange doctrines, the first view of which appals the reason. If these doctrines, so arbitrary in appearance, involve ideas eminently natural, and a system perfectly consistent, who will not be struck with it; and who will not wish to ascertain, by what secret, reason the most sublime springs from the folly of the cross, philosophy from dogma, and light from mystery?

Nowhere, as it appears to us, is this philosophical character of Christianity so vividly impressed, as on the doctrine of the gospel concerning faith. Not only is the general necessity of faith recognized, as in all religions; but this principle holds in it a place, enjoys an importance, and exhibits effects, which prove that the gospel alone has seized the principle in all its force, and applied it in all its extent; in a word, that it alone has thoroughly discovered, and fully satisfied the wants of human nature. The following proposition, then, will form a subject worthy of our attention. The religions of man, and the religion of Jesus Christ, are, with reference to the principle of faith, philosophically true, with this exception, that in the first, there is only a feeble and unprofitable beginning of truth, and in the second, the religion of Jesus Christ, it is found in all its plenitude, and all its power. To prove this proposition, we propose to develop, in its various applications, the language of our Saviour: "Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed."

I remark, first, that human religions have rendered homage to philosophical truth, by placing faith at their foundation; or rather, that they are themselves a homage to that truth, inasmuch as, by their existence alone, they have proclaimed the necessity and dignity of faith. This is the first idea we have to develop.

The necessity and dignity of faith;—nothing can be more philosophical, nothing more reasonable than this idea. And yet, if we are to believe vulgar declamation, and the sayings of people of the world, faith can be the portion only of weak minds and diseased imaginations. On the contrary, it is, in a certain degree, the common heritage of the human race; and in the highest degree, the peculiar gift of elevated characters, of noble spirits, and the source of whatever in the world bears the impress of greatness.

The entire life of man, considered in its essence, is composed of three things, thought, feeling, action. Feeling is the motive of action; knowledge is the point of departure for both, and therefore is the basis of life. From this every thing proceeds, to this everything returns. Before all, it is necessary to know; but the first glance enables us to see how little proportion there is between the means of knowledge and the multiplicity of its objects. It is impossible, indeed, that we should see everything, and have experience, in all the cases in which knowledge is desirable. A vast chasm, then, very frequently extends between knowledge and action; over that abyss a bridge is thrown by faith, which, resting on a given fact, upon a primary notion, extends itself over the void, and conveys us to the other side. Some kind of experience, physical or moral, a view external, or internal, of observation or intuition, is the point of departure, or the reason of faith. This first fact itself neither demands nor requires faith; but its consequences, its logical deductions, are not embodied, do not become a reality for man but by means of faith, which presents them to his mind, and constructs for him a world beyond that which personal experience has revealed.*

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* That all science, physical and metaphysical, is ultimately based upon faith is conceded by the profoundest philosophers. Certain fundamental axioms, or intuitions, must be taken for granted before a single step can be taken in any department of inquiry. In a word, the ultimate basis of all knowledge is a matter of faith. Upon this point we quote the following striking passage from Jouffroy's "Philosophical Miscellanies."

"This," (confidence in the ultimate decisions of our mind,) "is the entire foundation of the belief of humanity; when a man holds to a proposition, if you go back to the principle of his conviction, you will always find that it rests on the testimony of one or more of his faculties; an authority which resolves itself into that of intelligence, which would be altogether without value, if intelligence were not constituted so as to reflect things as they are.

"But how is it demonstrated that such is the constitution of intelligence? We not only have no *demonstration* of this kind, but it is impossible we should have one. In fact, we can demonstrate nothing, except with our intelligence; now, our intelligence cannot be admitted to demonstrate the veracity of our intelligence; for, in order to believe the demonstration, we must previously admit what the demonstration un-

We are accustomed to oppose reason and faith to each other ; we ought rather to say, that the one completes the other, and that they are two pillars, one of which could not, without the other, sustain life. Man is pitied, because he cannot know everything, or rather because he cannot see everything, and is thence compelled to believe. But this is to complain of one of his privileges. Direct knowledge does not call into requisition the living forces of the soul ; it is a passive state, honored by no spontaneity. But in the act of faith, (for it is an act, and not a state,) the soul is in some sort creative ; if it does not create the truth, it draws it from itself, appropriates, realizes it. Under its influence, an idea becomes a fact, a fact forever present. Thought, supported by a power of the soul, then manifests all its dignity in revealing its true independence ; man multiplies his life, extends his universe, and attains the perfect stature of a thinking being. His dignity is derived from believing, not from knowing.

Faith is invested with a character still more elevated, when it takes its point of departure from the word of a witness, whose soul ours has penetrated, and recognized its authority. Then, under a new name, that of confidence, it attaches itself to the noblest elements of our nature, sympathy, gratitude and love ; it is the condition of the social relations, and constitutes their true beauty. Far from contradicting reason, it is the fact

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dertakes to prove, namely, the veracity of intelligence ; which would be a vicious circle. We therefore have, and can have, no proof of the fact on which all our belief reposes ; that is, that human belief is not deceptive."

Faith in the testimony of our own minds, as to ultimate principles, is thus the foundation of all knowledge. *Faith* supports *philosophy* as well as *religion.*—T.

of a sublime reason, and one might say, that it is to the soul, what genius is to the intellect. When the apostles recognized, by his words, their risen Master, when Thomas, sceptical as to their testimony, wished to put his finger into the wounds of Jesus,—who was rational, if not the apostles, and irrational, if not Thomas? And, notwithstanding, for how many people would not Thomas be the type of prudence, if he had not become by tradition, that of doubt!

Let us resume. That power which supplies evidence, that power, which, at the moment when a man, advancing upon the ocean of thought, begins to lose his footing, and feels himself overwhelmed by the waves, lifts him up, sustains him, and enables him to swim through the foam of doubt to the pure and tranquil haven of certainty, is *faith*. It is by faith, according to the apostles, (Heb. xi. 1,) that what we hope for is brought nigh, and what we see not is made visible. It is faith which supplies the place of sight, the testimony of the senses, personal experience and mathematical evidence.*

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* The facts of which we have no personal knowledge or experience, are, so to speak, without us. They have, what the Germans call, an objective, but not a subjective reality. They exist, but, so far as we are concerned, might as well not exist. We cannot be said, in any proper sense of the word, to possess them. How, then, do they become ours? By faith in the testimony of others, is the common reply. But a mere belief, or a passive reception of testimony, would leave them as much without us as ever. They would exist for us, but not in us. But faith is an active principle. It seizes and appropriates the truth, and lodges it as a living element in the soul. Truth is made for the soul, and the soul for truth. It sees it by a sort of intuition. The moment it comes to the soul, it comes to its own. It finds a home there. But the soul itself is a truth and a power. It has laws and energies of its own, which it imparts to all the realities which come to it. In a word, it has

Faith is not the forced and passive adherence of a spirit vanquished by proofs; it is a power of the soul, as inexplicable in its principle as any of the native qualities which distinguish man amongst his fellow-creatures; a power which does not content itself with receiving the truth, but seizes it, embraces it, identifies itself with it, and permits itself to be carried by it towards all the consequences which it indicates or commands.

Faith is not credulity; the most credulous man is not always he who believes the most strongly. A belief, easily adopted, is as easily lost; and the firmest convictions are generally those which have cost the most. Credulity is but the servile compliance of a feeble mind; faith demands the entire sphere and energy of the soul.

Let us add, that it is a capacity and a function, the measure and intensity of which vary with individuals, while the direct evidence is for all equal and identical. Among the partisans of the same doctrine, and the equally sincere defenders of the same truth, some be-

the power of intuition and the power of faith. Faith is thus, as our author shows, a sort of mental creation, giving, as it does, reality and power to the invisible and the future. "It is the substance (realization) of things hoped for, the evidence (conviction, vision) of things not seen." By means of it we know what would otherwise be unknown, and do what would otherwise be undone. It is an energetic principle, and, in the department of religion, "worketh by love, and overcometh the world." By its aid, we are made to live, even while on earth, in the spiritual and eternal world. "We walk by faith, not by sight." Yet faith, as Vinet beautifully remarks, is the vision of the soul.

"The want of sight she well supplies,
She makes the pearly gates appear,
Far into distant worlds she pries,
And brings eternal glories near."

lieve more firmly; the object of their faith is more real, —is nearer and more vividly present to their minds. While others, whose conviction is full and free from doubts, do not possess so strong a conception, so vivid a view of the object of faith.

It might be supposed that when reasoning has produced conviction, there can be no further use or place for faith. This is a mistake. Reasoning leaves the truth without us. To become a part of our life, a part of ourselves, it requires to be vivified by faith. If the soul* concur not with the intellect, certainly the most legitimate would want strength and vivacity. There is a courage of the intellect like the courage of the soul, and thoroughly to believe a strange truth, supposes, in some cases, a power which all do not possess. In vain will some persons try to do this; for the conclusions to which they have come by a series of logical deductions, scarcely produce upon their minds an impression of reality. A great difference will always exist between reasoning and seeing, between deduction and experiment. It would seem, after all, that the mind has yet need of sight; that it does not yet possess that strong and efficacious conviction which it derives from a sensible impression; and it is for this that faith is useful; it is a sort of sight. Moreover, even when we have gathered together all the elements of certainty, the most satisfactory reasoning does not always in itself secure perfect repose to our minds. It might be said that, in the case of many persons, the more the road from the premises to the conclusion was long and circuitous, the more their conviction loses in fulness, as if it were fatigued by its wanderings, and had arrived exhausted at the end of its reasoning. Often will an obstinate doubt place itself in the train of the most logical deductions, a peculiar doubt, which brings no proofs, which makes no attempt to legitimate itself, but which, after all, throws a shadow over our best acquired convictions. When it is not born from within, it comes from without; spread in the crowd that surrounds us, it besieges us with the mass of all strange unbeliefs. It is not known how difficult it is to believe in the midst of a multitude which does not believe. Here is a noble exercise of faith; here its grandeur appears. This faith in contested truths, when calm, patient, and modest, is one of the essential attributes of all those men who have been great in "the hierarchy of minds." What is it that gives so much sublimity, in our imaginations, to the great names of Galileo, Descartes and Bacon, unless it be their faith in the truths with which they had enriched their minds? A Newton reigns with majesty over the world of science, but he reigns without combat; his image is that of a sovereign, not of a hero. But we feel more than admiration for the great names I have mentioned; gratitude, mingled with tenderness and respect, is the only sentiment which can become us. Our soul thanks them for not having doubted, for having preserved their faith in the midst of universal dissent, and for having heroically dispensed with the adherence of their contemporaries.

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* Here, as in many other instances, the term *soul* is used in a peculiar and restricted sense, as signifying the moral, sentimental and imaginative part of our nature —T

Shall I say this even? Yes, but to our shame. Faith finds its use even in the facts of personal experience. Such is our mind, such, at least, is it become, that it distinguishes between external and internal experience, and, yielding without hesitation to the testimony of the senses, it costs it an effort to yield to the testimony of consciousness. It requires submission, and by consequence, a species of faith, to admit those primitive truths which it carries within it, which have no antecedents, which bring no other warrant but their own existence, which cannot be proved, which can only be felt. Irresistible in their nature, still some require an effort in order to believe them. Have we not seen some such who have endeavored to draw their notions of justice from those of utility, so as to go back, by this circuit, to matter, and consequently to physical experience?* It might be said that it was painful to them to see the road to knowledge shortened before them, that they regretted the absence of that circuitous path which

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* Our author here refers to the sensual philosophy of such men as Condillac and Helvetius, who, taking Locke's idea, that all our knowledge is derived from sensation and reflection, have carried it out to the most extreme and absurd consequences, proving thus that there must be some defect in the system of Locke, or at least in his method of stating it. These material and Epicurean philosophers refer all our notions of justice to utility, all our feelings of reverence, affection and gratitude to mere emotion and sensation. In their analysis, the loftiest sentiments are reduced to the images and impressions of material forms. The very soul is materialized, and the eternal God is either blotted from existence or represented as the shadowy and infinite refinement of physical existence.

The Abbé Condillac, who was a worthy man, and an elegant writer, never intended to go so far as this, but his successors soon ran down his system to absolute atheism, which, for some time, was the prevalent philosophy in France. A better system is beginning to prevail there; still, even the spiritual philosophy is liable to run to the same extreme as gross materialism. The great difficulty with such philosophers as Cousin and some others, is, that they feel themselves superior to the Word of God. Their transcendentalism is liable to become as sceptical and irreligious as the sensualism of Helvetius and Voltaire.—T.

God wished to spare them; and it is this strange prejudice that obliges us, in some sort, to do violence to the nature of things, and exhibit, as an act of faith, what is only a manifestation of evidence.

However this may be, faith, that is to say, in all possible spheres the *vision* of the *invisible*, and the *absent* brought *nigh*, is the energy of the soul, and the energy of life. We do not go too far in saying that it is the point of departure for all action; since to act is to quit the firm position of the present, and stretch the hand into the future. But this, at least, is certain, that faith is the source of everything in the eyes of man, which bears a character of dignity and force. Vulgar souls wish to see, to touch, to grasp; others have the eye of faith, and they are great! It is always by having faith in others, in themselves, in duty, or in the Divinity, that men have done great things. Faith has been, in all time, the strength of the feeble, the salvation of the miserable. In great crises, in grand exigences, the favorable chance has always been for him who hoped against hope. And the greatness of individuals or of nations may be measured precisely by the greatness of their faith.

It was by faith that Leonidas, charged with three hundred men for the salvation of Greece, encountered eight hundred thousand Persians. His country had sent him to die at Thermopylæ. He died there. What he did was by no means reasonable, according to ordinary views. All the probabilities were against him; but in throwing into the balance the weight of his lofty soul, and three hundred heroic deaths, he did violence to fortune. His death, as one has happily said, was "well laid out." Greece, united by so great an example, pledged herself to be invincible. And the same spirit of faith,—faith, I mean, in her own power,—was the principle of all those actions in that famous Persian war which secured the independence of Greece.

What was it that sustained amid the wastes of the ocean, that intrepid mortal who has given us a new world? It was an ardent faith. His spirit, convinced, had already touched America, had already trodden its shores, had there founded colonies and states, and conveyed, by a new road, shorter though indirect, the religion of Jesus Christ to the regions of the rising sun.* He led his companions to a known land; he went home. Thus, from the moment that he received this conviction, with what patience have you seen him go from sovereign to sovereign, entreating them to accept a world! He pursued, during long years, his sublime mendicity, pained by refusals, but never affected by contempt, bearing everything, provided only that he should be furnished with the means of giving to some one that marvellous land which he had placed in the midst of the ocean. Amid the dangers of an adventurous navigation, amid the cries of a mutinous crew, seeing his death written in the angry eyes of his sailors, he keeps his faith, he lives by his faith, and asks only three days, the last of which presents to him his conquest.

What power had the last Brutus, at the moment when he abandoned his faith? From the time of his melancholy vision, produced by a diminution of that faith, it might have been predicted, that his own destiny and that of the republic were finished. He felt it himself;

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* That is to say, Columbus believed that by going west, he should reach the eastern hemisphere, by an easier, yet more indirect route, and convey to those distant regions the blessings of Christianity.—T.

it was with a presentiment of defeat that he fought at Philippi. And such a presentiment always realizes itself.

The Romans, at their origin, persuaded themselves that they could found an eternal city. This conviction was the principle of their disastrous greatness. Perpetuated from generation to generation, this idea conquered for them the world. An unheard-of policy made them resolve never to treat with an enemy, except as conquerors. How much value did they attach to faith, when, after the battle of Cannæ they thanked the imprudent Varro for not having despaired of the salvation of the republic? It would certainly make a vicious circle, to say, we believe in victory, therefore we shall conquer. But it is not always the people who reason the best, that are the strongest; and the power of man generally lies more in his conviction itself, than in the goodness of the proofs by which it is sustained.

Whence is derived the long duration of certain forms of government, and of certain institutions, which to-day we find so little conformed to right and reason? From the faith of the people, from a sentiment, slightly rational, and by no means clear, but energetic and profound, a sort of political religion. It is important that a government should be just, a dynasty beneficent, an institution reasonable; but faith, up to a certain point, can take the place of these things, while these do not always supply the want of faith. The best institutions, in respect to solidity and duration, are not the most conformed to theory; faith preserves them better than reason; and the most rational are not quite consolidated, until after the convictions of the mind have become the property of the heart, until the citizen, no longer searching incessantly for the reasons of submission, obeys by a certain lively and voluntary impulse, the principle of which is nothing but faith.

Another thing still more surprising, faith often attaches itself to a man! There are great characters, powerful wills, to whom is given a mysterious empire over less energetic natures. The majority of men live by this faith in powerful men. A few individuals lead in their orbits the whole human race. They do not weigh all the reasons which such men give; they do not calculate all the chances which they develop; they do not judge them, they only believe in them. Many men, for decision, for action, for faith, follow the impulse of these privileged natures! And why should this astonish us? Their feebleness is transformed into strength under that powerful influence, and they become capable, by sympathy, of things which, left to themselves, they would never have imagined, thought of, nor desired. Amid dangers, when fear is in all hearts, the crowd derive courage and confidence from the assured words of a man, who has no one to trust but himself. Every one confides in *him* who confides in himself, and his audacious hope is often the best resource, in a moment of general anxiety.

But we leave to others the task of multiplying examples. We are sure that from all points of history proofs arise of the truth we exhibit. Wherever man has given to the future the vividness of the present, and to the representations of his own mind the power of reality, wherever man believes in others, in himself, or in God, he is strong. I mean, with a relative strength; strong in one respect, feeble, perhaps, in all others; strong for an emergency, feeble, perhaps, beyond it; strong for good, strong also for evil.

Human religions, then, have rendered homage to a truth, and comprehended a general want, in furnishing to man an object of faith, superior in its nature to all others. They have fully acknowledged, that in the rude path of life, man has not enough, in what he knows, and in what he sees; that his most solid supports are in the region of the invisible, and that he will always be less strong by outward realities than by faith. They give strength to numerous souls who cannot confide in themselves; and, by placing in heaven succor and hope, they govern from on high, the events which envelop and protect the whole life.

CHRISTIAN FAITH.

"Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."—John xx. 29

We have sufficiently exalted human faith, let us abase it now. Having spoken of its marvels, let us recount its miseries.

Human religions have recognized a want of our nature; they have excited and cherished it, but they have deceived it. In the first place, they were pure inventions of man. Not that faith, considered as a motive of action, and a source of energy, should absolutely need to repose upon the truth, but that what is false cannot last, and must, at the very least, give place to a new error. Faith in human inventions may be firm and lively so long as there is a proportion between them and the degree of existing mental culture. That epoch past, faith gradually evaporates, leaving dry, so to speak, one class of society after another; the dregs of belief then remain with the dregs of the people; the more elevated classes are sceptical or indifferent; and the thinkers are fatalists or atheists. If, in some extraordinary cases, the old religion continues, it is, as we have seen in a preceding discourse, at the expense of intellectual advancement and every other kind of progress.

These old religions, instead of giving energy to the soul, exhaust it; instead of sustaining, oppress it.

In another respect, the faith of the heathen is still less commendable. It is entirely alien to the moral perfection of man; often, indeed, directly opposed to it. It proposes to console man, it more frequently tyrannizes over him. Nowhere has it for its final aim to regenerate him; nowhere does it rise to the sublime idea of causing him to find his happiness in his regeneration.

Shall we say aught respecting the faith of deists? Thoroughly to appreciate it in an era like ours, it ought, at the very first, to be divested of what it has involuntarily borrowed from the gospel. The deism of our day is more or less tinctured with Christianity; this is the reason why it does not, like that of antiquity, lose itself in fatalism. But whatever it may be, and taking it in its best forms, we must acknowledge that the faith of the deist is only an opinion; an opinion too, exceedingly vague and fluctuating, and which, as a motive of action, does not avail so much as the faith of the heathen. Let deism but have its devotees, who, to please their divinity, permit themselves to be crushed beneath the wheels of his car, and we will acknowledge that deism is a religion.

Thus it is not without a kind of pleasure that we behold the sceptics of our day, not knowing what to do with their natural religion, and haunted by a desire to believe, frankly addressing themselves to other objects, and, strange to tell, making for themselves a religion without a divinity. I do not speak here of the covetous, who, according to St. Paul, are real idolaters, nor of the sensual, who, according to the same apostle, "make a God of their belly." It is of souls not sunk so low, souls who, less sceptical originally, have retained their craving, their thirst for the infinite, but have mistaken its true import. This craving for God and religion, which unconsciously torments them, induces them to seek upon earth some object of adoration; for it is necessary that man should adore something. It is difficult to say how they come to invest with a character of infinity, objects whose finite nature must continually strike us; but it is certain that this illusion is common. Some make science the object of their passionate devotion. Others evoke the genius of humanity, or, as they say, its *ideal*, devoting to its perfection and triumph, equally ideal, whatever they possess of affection, of thought and of power. Others, and, in our day, the greatest number, have made for themselves a religion of political liberty. The triumph of certain principles of right in society, is to them what the kingdom of God and eternal life are to the Christian. They have their worship, their devotion, their fanaticism; and those very men who smile at the mysticism of Christian sects, have also their mysticism, less tender and less spiritual, but more inconceivable.

Thus, in spite of all their efforts to the contrary, and, notwithstanding all their pretensions, each one, we doubt not, has his religion, each has his worship, each deifies something, and when he knows not what *idea* to make divine, he deifies himself.

It was in this way that infidelity commenced in the garden of Eden; and as such was its beginning, such also is its final result. In reality all other apotheoses, if we examine them carefully, come to this. In science, in reason, in liberty, it is himself to which man renders homage. But faith in one's self originates a particular kind of worship, which it is important to notice. It consists of a circle, the most vicious and absurd. The subject and the object are confounded in the same individual; the adorer adores himself, the believer believes in himself; that is to say, since worship always supposes a relation of inequality, the same individual finds himself inferior to himself; and since faith supposes an authority, the authority in this case submits to the same authority. This confusion of ideas no longer strikes us when we have permitted the inconceivable idea to enter our minds that we are something beside ourselves,—that the branch can subsist without the trunk; whence it follows that we are at once above and beneath ourselves, that the same persons are by turns their own masters and their own servants. Thus live by choice and system some men who pass for sages. They have faith in themselves, in their wisdom, energy, will and virtue; and when this faith succeeds in rooting itself firmly in the heart, it is capable of producing, outwardly, great effects! I have said great, but upon this point I refer you to Jesus Christ himself, who says, "that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination with God."

Do you prefer this faith in ideas, and this faith in self, to the faith of the heathen in their imaginary gods? And why not see that, independently of the pride and irreligion which characterize these two forms of faith, they are, even humanly speaking, extremely defective? Here it is proper to notice the imprudence with which some have exalted *subjective* faith, according to the name given it by the schools, above *objective* faith, by intimating that the main thing is to believe firmly, whatever, in other respects, be the object of faith; intending, doubtless, to apply this maxim only to the variations in the truth, not to the truth itself. But how easy is the transition from the one to the other. Why deny that the men of whom we have just been speaking possess, in a high degree, subjective faith ; and that such faith may be in them a quick and intense energy, fitted equally for resistance and movement ? But is this the only question to be asked respecting it ? Are we to be satisfied with its being powerful, without demanding an account of the manner in which it uses its power? What, then, are the effects of this much vaunted faith of man in man ? Does it not leave in his interior nature immense chasms ? Does it not cultivate it, to speak more plainly, in the wrong direction, and in a way to corrupt it ? When all the fluids of the body are conveyed to one part of the system, what becomes of the rest ? When all the devotions of man are addressed to man, what becomes of God ? And what a monstrosity is that faith which has become erroneous and false to such an extent as this ?

But do not believe that this faith, even in its own sphere, has all the prerogatives ascribed to it. There are, I allow, inflexible spirits, whom age only hardens, and who die in their superstition, fanatical to the last, touching enlightenment, civilization, and freedom. But the greater number disabuse and free themselves before they die. Some of them have been seen smiling at their former worship, and trampling under their feet with disdain the ruins of their former idols. The soul is easily satiated with what is not true ; and disgust is then proportioned to previous enthusiasm. Ye will come to this, ye who believe in the regeneration of the human race by political freedom ; ye who have never known that, until man becomes the servant of God, he can never enjoy true freedom ; ye will sigh over your dreams when popular passions have perhaps colored them with blood ! Ye will come to this, ye who are confident in your native generosity, in the liberality of your sentiments and the purity of your intentions, in a word, ye that have faith in yourselves. When a thousand humiliating falls have convinced you of your weakness, when disabused with reference to others, ye shall be disabused also with reference to yourselves, when ye shall exclaim, like Brutus, "O Virtue, thou art only a phantom !" what will then remain to you ? That which has remained to so many others, the pleasures of selfishness or of sensuality, the last bourne of all errors, the vile residuum of all false systems. If, indeed, it shall not then be given you to accept in exchange for the faith which has deserted you, a better faith which will never desert you, and which it now remains for us to announce.

We declare to you the faith of the gospel ; study its characteristics, and become acquainted with its excellence.

Nowhere is the importance of faith estimated so high as in the gospel. In the first place, you learn, at the very first glance, that it is faith which saves, not for time, but for eternity. "By faith ye are saved," says St. Paul. "If thou confess Jesus Christ with thy mouth, and believe with thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." "Christ is the author of eternal salvation to all them that believe." This is the first characteristic of Christian faith, that salvation depends on it.

But do not, on this account, consider it as a meritorious act. While in other religions faith is an arbitrary work to which it has pleased the Divinity to attach a merit and a recompense, a work without any other value than an accidental one, communicated to it by the promise from on high ; in the gospel, faith is represented as having an intrinsic power, a virtue of its own, a direct influence upon the life, and by the life upon salvation. Faith, according to the gospel, saves only by regenerating. It consists in receiving into the heart those things which are fitted to change it. The Christian, with reference to God, to himself, to life, has convictions entirely different from those of the world, if, indeed, the world has upon these subjects anything like convictions. But such is the doctrine of the gospel, that when it penetrates a spirit agitated by remorse and the terrors of the judgment to come, it produces a joy and gratitude, the inevitable effect of which is to impel it in a direction opposite to that which it has hitherto followed. The believer has found peace ; can he abandon the source of peace ? Can he wander away to shattered cisterns that can hold no water, when within his reach he has fountains of living waters springing up unto everlasting life ? Can he fail to obey Him, who, for his benefit, became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross ? Will he not submit to the providence of that God, who, having given to him his only-begotten Son, has proved to him that, in all things, He can desire nothing but his happiness ? Will he, who loves his Father in heaven, hate any of his brethren on earth ? And will he fail to pray, who knows that the very Spirit of God makes intercession for him with unutterable sighs ? Yes ! Christian faith is the victory over the world ; Christian faith contains all the elements of a holy life. And what proves this better than all reasonings is, the many holy lives, so consistent and harmonious, of which Christianity alone supplies the model, and especially those wondrous revolutions which render persons truly converted new creatures; which subdue to sweetness so many angry souls, to patience, impetuous natures, to humility, haughty spirits, to sincerity, dissembling characters, to tranquillity, troubled hearts; which, in a word, creates in man a new soul, capable of all the virtues the very opposite of the vices which have tyrannized over his life.

The unity of life ought to correspond to the unity of the principle, and not only so, but to its immensity. Faith in something finite, can produce only finite results; faith in anything imperfect or fleeting, only imperfect and fleeting results. But God is the principle which includes all principles; he is more, he is the principle which regulates and quickens all. Everything is false and mutilated if it relate not to God; but all is true, complete, united, fruitful, which has the true God for its principle. What part of the field of morals can remain sterile and useless under an influence from which nothing can escape? Over what virtue cannot God preside? With what duty can He dispense? How shall He, who is justice, goodness, and beauty supreme, fail to attract to himself whatever is just, and good, and beautiful? It is on this account that the knowledge of God, of the true God, is the only principle of a perfect morality; and most insensate is he who would ascribe to it any other.

But do not demand of Christian faith only splendid things. It has these, it is true; but it holds in tension all the strings of the soul at once, and extends its influence to all points at the same time. We have seen Leonidas perish at Thermopylæ for the salvation of Greece. Christian faith would teach a Christian to do as much as that; but it would also render him capable, every day, of a thousand little sacrifices. It would arm his soul against all internal assaults of anger, of envy, and of false glory. Could the faith of Leonidas do all these things?

This infinite variety, this immensity of application of the Christian faith, is better explained by a reference to its dominant characteristic, which is love. Love prescribes no limits. Were a sentiment only of legal justice in the heart of a Christian, he would try to measure his task, he would trace for himself precise limits, he would know where to stop; but obeying because he loves, loving Him whom he cannot love too much, He abandons himself to the impulse of his heart as the worldling abandons himself to his passion. He never says, and he never can say, it is enough. He would fear that he loved no longer when he could say to his love, "Hither shalt thou come, and no farther." Love knows neither precaution nor reserve; it ever desires more; it is inflamed by its own movement; it grows by sacrifices themselves, expects to receive in the measure that it gives, and is itself its own reward; for the true reward of love is to love yet more and more. Where, then, in its applications, shall a faith stop which resolves itself into love?

It is scarcely necessary, after all this, to prove that Christian faith is an energetic principle of action. To *abstain* and *sustain* constitute but half of the morality founded upon love. Very far from confining itself to a character of obedient passivity, the holy impatience of love seeks and multiplies occasions of testifying its ardor towards the Saviour God from whom it has emanated. Faithful to the express commands of the gospel and the example of Jesus Christ, whose holy activity never relaxed, Christian love, each moment, creates for itself new spheres of labor, and new domains to conquer. Will not even the enemies of Christianity be the first to admit an activity which vexes and alarms them daily? Do not those who accuse Christian faith of fanaticism render a beautiful homage to the force of action which dwells in it? Christ well characterized the faith which he brought into the world, when he said, with so much energy,—"If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye would say to this fig tree, be thou plucked up by the roots, and be thou cast into the midst of the sea; and it would do it." Such, indeed, is the power of Christian faith, that, long before the appearance of Christ, when it was nourished only in the shadow of Him that was to come, already Christians by anticipation, under the ancient dispensation, were rendered capable, by their faith, of the most heroic efforts and the most extraordinary works. Read in the eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the picture of what this faith enabled the Christians of the ancient covenant to do; bring together that picture and the one presented from the days of the apostles to ours, and you will not doubt, that if faith, in general, is an energetic principle of action, Christian faith is the most energetic of all.

A last characteristic of this faith is its certainty. I do not speak of that array of external proofs which form the imposing bulwark of the Christian revelation; proofs for which the sceptics of our day affect a contempt so little philosophical, and which scarcely one in a hundred gives himself the trouble to examine. I do not speak of them here, for they are not equally within the reach of all the faithful. But the Christian has a proof better still; he has God present in the heart; he feels, every moment, the influence of the Spirit of God in his soul. He loves; therefore he has the truth. His proof is not of a nature to be communicated by words; but neither can words take it away. You cannot prove to him that he does not love God; and if he loves God, will you dare to insist that he does not know God? I have already asked it once, and I ask it again: Can he who loves God be deceived? Is he not in possession of the truth? And if Christianity alone gives him power to love God, is not Christianity exclusively the truth? Such is the certainty in which the faithful rejoice. I do not add, that it is cherished and quickened by the Holy Spirit. I only speak of obvious facts, facts respecting which the unbelieving as well as the believing can satisfy themselves. And I limit myself to saying, that the faith of the true Christian has for its peculiar characteristic a certainty which elevates it above that of any other belief.

Behold, ye men of the world, ye thinkers, ye great actors in the concerns of time! behold the faith which I propose to your hearts, empty and famishing for faith, say rather deceived by faith itself! Certainly it does not depend upon me to make you accept it, by the portrait I have traced, nor upon you to become its votaries, through this simple exposition. Arguments do not change man; life only teaches life; God only reveals God. But is what we have said without some attainable end and application? No, if we have succeeded in making you understand at least the imperfections of your faith, and the superiority of Christian faith with reference to life and action. As to the first point, it is, I believe, beyond contradiction. As to the second, we have proved, it appears to us, all that we had to prove. We have not demonstrated that the Christian religion is true, that the revelations upon which it rests are authentic. Our only object was to demonstrate that, like all other beliefs, it renders homage to a want of the human soul, and, what no other belief has yet done, that it has satisfied this want; that it furnishes to man a principle of energy and action, the distinctive features of which are not found united in any other faith; that it has an intensity, a generality of application, an elevation of tendency, and, in fine, a certainty which no other possesses; that in all these respects it presents a type of perfection which has never been realized in any human invention; and that if God himself has given a faith to the world, it is impossible he should have given a better in any respect. After this, it would appear quite superfluous to inquire if the Christian religion is true. To us, this proof is sufficient; and we earnestly pray that it may strike others as it strikes us. May such, by the grace of God, be the result of this address.

PRACTICAL ATHEISM.

"Without God in the world."—**Eph. xi. 12.**

These words were addressed by St. Paul to the recently converted Christians, at Ephesus, and form a part of the chapter, in which that great apostle reminds them of the state of darkness, of moral depravity and condemnation, in which they were plunged, before the messengers of salvation had proclaimed to them Jesus Christ. The painful truth included in this text, being established by the infallible authority of the divine word, and being found in accordance with the whole current of Christian revelation, we might dispense with the task of seeking any other proofs of it. But God has not forbidden us to prove and illustrate the perfect and wonderful harmony of his word, with the clearest principles of reason and nature. On this account, we invite you to investigate with us the proofs of that proposition of St. Paul, that the Ephesians, before knowing Jesus Christ, were without God in the world.

Aid us by your attention. And if you involuntarily feel some prejudices against the position we are about to sustain, be willing to repress them for a few moments. I am not going to prove that the Ephesians, before their conversion, did not believe in God; that were an untenable position. The belief in God is so inherent in the human race, so essential to our reason, that the most depraved persons can with difficulty free themselves from it. Not every one that wishes it is an atheist; the very devils believe and tremble. How could Paul say such a thing of the Ephesians, in sight, as it were, of the temple of their Diana? How could he say so, when at Athens, beholding altars everywhere, he had reproached the inhabitants of that celebrated city with being, in some sort, too devout? What he wished to say, and what we seek to prove, is, that in the case of an unconverted Ephesian, nay more, of the most enlightened Ephesian, of him who in the steps of the philosophers had risen to the idea of the divine unity, it would have been the same thing, not to believe in God, as to believe in him as he did.

And if this even should appear to some hard to believe, I beg them to give attention to the following question. What is it to believe in the existence of a being? Is it not to believe that there is a subject, in which certain qualities unite, that distinguish it from all others? Do not these qualities, or properties, make the particular object or being what it is, and not something else; and when we deny all these qualities, or properties, one after another, does it not amount to denying the object itself?

What would you say of a people, who had resolved to give themselves a king, who had even invested a man with that illustrious dignity, but who, from some motive, should take from him successively, the right to raise armies, and to make war and peace, the privilege of nominating to offices, and the revenues necessary to sustain his dignity, and finally those marks of respect, which his title appears to demand? You would say that this people had no king. In vain would a man exist among them whom they called king; he is not one, since he cannot be such, without certain qualities and prerogatives; which qualities and prerogatives he has not. This is a republic, under the name of a monarchy.

What, in like manner, would you say of a man, or of a society, who should say, we acknowledge a God, but who should refuse to that God the attributes most essential to his dignity, and most inseparable from the idea of his perfection; and reduce him, so to speak, to nothing but a name? Assuredly, you would say, that such a man, and such a society, do not believe in God, and that under the name of religion, they profess atheism.

Very well, it will be said, the principle is incontestable; but who dreams of disputing it? Is there in the world any one so unreasonable as to deny the perfections of God, such as his goodness, his justice, and his providence? Yes, there is one in the world who denies them. It is the Ephesian before his conversion.

Here we have a second step to take. We have seen that to deny the attributes essential to the nature of God, is to deny God; you must also grant us now, that to deny the acts, which are a necessary consequence of his attributes, is to deny those attributes themselves. In other words, it is to deny the perfections of God, to refuse to him the exercise of these perfections. For what is a perfection without its exercise? What is holiness without its application? What is it but a useless power? It is a name, it is nothing.

You believe in the justice of God, St. Paul might say to the Ephesians. You believe, then, that God sustains, defends, and vindicates a moral order, which he has established for the benefit of his creatures, and for his own glory. You believe that this justice, being infinite, cannot be satisfied, but by an obedience entire and unreserved. You believe that this justice, being spiritual, demands the obedience not of the hands only, but of the heart and the will. You believe that this justice, being inviolable, can receive no stain, without demanding a reparation, sudden, complete, absolute. You believe all this, you say; consequently you believe also that your sins ought to be punished, that your heart which is not given to God, ought to be condemned; that your penitence effaces none of your transgressions, since what is done cannot be undone, and violated order is not less violated; that your good works can no more do so, since the good you have done in reparation of your sins, ought to be done just as much as if you had no sins for which to make reparation. You believe, then, that you are condemned, necessarily condemned. If you do not believe it, you have a God without justice, that is to say, you have no God.

I suppose, however, might St. Paul say, that you believe in his justice; but do you believe in his goodness? You believe in it, you say. But certainly not in a goodness limited, mingled with weakness, liable to change. You believe that God loves his creatures with an everlasting love; that no tenderness in the world, not even that of a mother, is comparable to his; that it is not only your body, but your soul, that God loves; and that this love is as active as it is eternal. Is it not true that you believe all this? Ah! who does not believe it; who does not need to believe it? Is it not under the features of love, that you are pleased to represent the

Supreme Being? It is so. But between you and his goodness, what frightful phantom rises, and covers, as with boding wing, his face full of benignity? It is the phantom of his justice, the image of your sins. Try to invoke, as a Father, him you have never ceased to offend! Try to believe in all the goodness of God, in spite of his vengeance!* Terrible alternative, not to be able to admit the goodness of God, without denying his justice, nor to believe in his justice without denying his goodness. No, not to you, is he the gracious God; but he shall be, if you listen to the marvellous fact we are charged to announce to you. A Redeemer has been found; the great mediation so often shadowed on earth, in all the religions of the nations, has been realized in heaven. God has given his Son, and his Son has given himself, to offer to his Father the only satisfaction he could accept, the only atonement which could be efficacious, the only reconciliation which "reconciles all things." If he had not given himself, justice, which nothing can arrest, would have had its course. But can you, who have not received Jesus Christ, believe in God as a gracious God? Can you, from the depths of your misery and rejection, cry to him, "Our Father who art in heaven?" You have in the world a master, an accuser, a judge; have you truly a God?

You believe in providence, might St. Paul say to the Ephesians. Ah, blessed is he who believes in so great a mystery! It is a proof that he has passed from death to life. But do you know thoroughly what it is to believe in providence? Alas! I doubt it; for why, when an event occurs which involves your welfare, do you immediately speak of fate or chance? And why, when you receive some benefit from men, does your gratitude stop with them, instead of rising to the Eternal? And why, when you receive some evil from them, do you think only of being indignant towards the mortal hand which strikes you, and never think of adoring with awe the divine authority, without whose permission you could not have been struck? And why, in view of the revolutions of the world, do you perceive nothing but secondary causes, which indeed ought to be carefully studied, but from which you never rise to the Great First Cause? Is that to believe in providence? But what we have just referred to, is only a part of the sphere of the activity of Jehovah. If he controls the world of things, he governs also, under another name, the world of morals; and that name is the Holy Spirit. Do you believe in the Holy Spirit? Do you believe that from him proceed all good resolutions and all good thoughts? Do you believe that his influence is freely given by our Heavenly Father to all those who ask it? It would seem to require no great effort to believe that. No doctrine is more reasonable. We cannot, without absurdity, deny to God, who has made our minds, the power and influence to direct them. But if you do not believe in the Holy Spirit, in that quickening soul of the moral world, I ask you, what God do you possess?

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* Vengeance here means, simply the administration of justice, particularly in the infliction of punishment.—T.

Behold, my brethren, what St. Paul might have said to the Ephesians before their conversion. Behold, too, what he could not say to them, after their conversion. The Christian sees manifested, and developed, in perfect harmony, the justice, the goodness, and the providence of God. In Jesus Christ they are consummated, realized, enthroned. In him the divine justice has been accomplished,—by him the goodness of God has been proclaimed,—by him, in fine, the government of the Holy Spirit and a moral providence have been placed beyond a doubt. These truths are the whole substance and aim of the gospel. The Christian alone knows God; the Christian alone has a God.

I feel as much as any one, all that is paradoxical and harsh, which such an assertion at the first moment presents. But I ask, what is that God, who should have no right either to our adoration, our confidence, or our love? And, indeed, how can we adore a God, whose justice, pliable and soft, should accommodate itself to the corruption of our hearts, and the perversity of our thoughts? How, on the other hand, love a God whom we could not behold, but under the aspect, and with the attributes of a severe and inexorable judge? How could we confide in a God who, indifferent to our temporal interests, and to those of our souls, should exercise no supervision over our conduct and destiny? And, we ask once more, what is a God whom we can neither know, adore, nor love? In truth, my brethren, for it serves little purpose to soften the words, the profession of the faith of the Ephesians is an involuntary profession of atheism. St. Paul might say to him, do not exile your God amid the splendors of a distant glory, whence the sun of righteousness can never warm the moral world, and shed upon it the purifying influence of its rays; or, if such be the God you wish, do not, I pray you, mock yourselves so cruelly; and at least respect, by never pronouncing, a name which you can no longer regard as holy. Or rather pronounce it unceasingly, as the name of a being forever absent and lost; cultivate, and so to speak, enhance by your tears, that idea, the grandeur of which will remind you of your destitution; but do not abuse, do not flatter yoursveles, by imagining you have a God, when you have nothing more than the idea. Acknowledge to yourselves, not that the universe has no God, a thing you have never been able to doubt, but that you, in some sense, fallen below the rest of created beings, are without God in the world.

Behold, what reason, honestly interrogated, furnishes us touching the religion of the Ephesian before his conversion. But as his religion, such also will his life be. For it is impossible that he that is without God in the world should live like him who has a God. And to prove it, we do not require to develop to you his moral conduct, and show you how far he is removed from that holiness of which God is at once the source, the motive, and the model. Without running over the whole circle of his relations, it is sufficient to say what he is with relation to God; in other words, to point out the place which God occupies in his moral life. That place, alas! how small it is! The idea of God is neither the centre of his thoughts, nor the soul of his life, but an idea accessory, supernumerary, very often importunate, and associated indifferently with his other thoughts. If God did not exist at all, the circle of his ideas would not be less complete, nor his reason less satisfied. When he is occupied with the idea of God, it is as a simple view of the intellect, not as a real fact, which determines the aim of existence, and the value of life. He applies it less to practical purposes, than the astronomer the figure of the earth, the course of the stars, and the measure of the heavens. His belief in God is almost purely negative. It permits God to exist, not being able to do otherwise; but this belief neither controls his life, nor regulates his conduct. He believes in God; he says so when occasion requires it; but it does not gratify him to speak of it to his family or his friends; he never entertains his children with it, and he makes no use of it in their education. In a word, his thought is not full of God, does not live upon God; so that we might say of him, in his first relation, that he is without God in the world.

Yet there is one voice in the universe. The heavens declare the glory of God; though they have no language, properly speaking, their voice is heard, even by the dullest ear; and through the ear, that voice sometimes penetrates to the heart. Yes, in view of that magnificent aspect of nature, all full of love and life, the heart of the Ephesian is sometimes softened. I will not ask him, why, in gazing upon these beauties, his heart soon aches, and his bosom heaves with sighs; I will not ask him whence comes that involuntary sadness, which succeeds the rapture of the first view. I will not say that what then weighs upon his thoughts is the contrast between nature so beautiful, and a soul degraded; between an order so perfect, and the disorder of his feelings and thoughts; between that exuberance of life, spread through immensity, and the consciousness of a fallen existence, which dares not reflect upon its duration. I will not ask him to observe that this feeling is so appropriate to a soul like his, that he recurs to it at each emotion of joy, as to a signal, appointed to poison and to tarnish it. And I will not conclude, as I might do, that all this comes from the fact that God is absent. No, I shall only ask, What is that emotion? What does it prove? Does it give you a God? Alas, that confused feeling has moved the souls of millions who have gazed upon these beauties, and have left them such as they were. Nature, which excites alternately pleasure and pain, regenerates no one. Observe the Ephesian, whom it has touched. That fleeting emotion, as soon as dissipated, restores him wholly to the world. Even if he rendered worship to his Creator, his life is not a worship; it is not devoted to the Lord of heaven and earth. His conduct obeys a thousand impulses by turns, but he does not know the meaning of that admirable precept, "Whatsoever ye do, do it for the Lord, and not for man; glorify God in your spirits, and in your bodies, which are his." It is not for God that he is a literary man, a merchant, an artisan, a man of property, a laborer, a citizen, or the head of a family; it is for himself. He is his own God and his own law.

Events adverse and prosperous come by turns. They succeed each other without interruption, and always find him without God. Happy,—he has no emotion of gratitude to the Lord. Unhappy,—he does not receive the occasion of it as a reproof or a counsel. Sick,—he thinks not of the great Physician. Dying,—he has no hope of heaven. In a word, that thought of God which must be everything or nothing in the life, is nothing in his; nothing, at least, worth estimating. He yields nothing to it, sacrifices nothing, offers nothing. And, after all this, he will tell us that he has a God!

But we have spoken long enough of this imaginary being, this unregenerate Ephesian. Are there, in your opinion, no sceptics but in Ephesus? Is there no heathenism but in the heathen world? Is the portrait we have drawn applicable only to an extinct race? And is it not applicable to those thousands, alas! to those millions of the heathen of Christianity, who also live without God in the world? Let there be no delusion here; this description is either false or true. False, it applies to no one, and to the Ephesian idolater no more than another; true, it has its originals in all ages, in all countries, and, without doubt, also among us.

God forbid that I should make but one class of all the persons who do not believe the gospel. There are those among them who are climbing towards the truth, with a slow, but persevering pace. There is already something of Christianity in those serious and tender souls, who are seeking, on all sides, another God than that which the world has provided for them. For already, without having a clear notion of the gospel, they have received from the Holy Spirit a secret impulse, which urges them to seek a God, invested with those attributes which the gospel has revealed, a God of infinite justice, a God of infinite goodness, a God of providence. Religion stretches out her hands to them, and salutes them with a gentle name, even at the time when they would seem to resist her; for she discerns in them a thirst for righteousness and peace, which she only is capable of satisfying. And she waits for the happy moment, when, recognizing the striking harmony between the Christian revelations and the imperfect revelations they have received from the voice within, these Christians by anticipation, these Christians by desire and want, shall become such in fact and profession.

But this takes nothing from the truth we have established, touching the unbeliever who is living without God in the world. And whither would this lead us, were we to pursue the subject? We have spoken only of his opinions, of his interior feelings. And his actions, do not they prove that his thoughts, according to the energetic language of the prophet, *are all as if there were no God?* This I should aim to show, if the limits of this discourse permitted it. I should discover it to you as much in the virtuous as in the vicious unbeliever. I should show you in both the same forgetfulness of God, the same indifference to his glory, the same idolatry of self. But a subject of such importance requires space. It is not in a few words that we can clear up all the difficulties with which it is connected.

But why do I occupy your attention with these things? Have they reference to you? Or is this sermon not made rather for a pagan than for a Christian temple? But is it that doubt and error never come to sit in a Christian church? They may enter thither to seek for light! God bless so good an intention, for there is piety even in that! In such a case, it is proper to speak of these things. But even in an audience, all the members of which are penetrated with the truths I have discussed, such a subject is also appropriate. The Christian cannot but gain something by inquiring diligently into the foundations and privileges of his faith. He ought to love to review the titles of his adoption. He ought also to learn how to exhibit them with dignity, and explain them with gentleness, to those who ask from him an account of his glorious hope. And although the gospel can prove itself true by its own power, and without any human aid, to a soul thirsting for righteousness, nevertheless the examination of these proofs, so rich and so beautiful, is a natural means which God often uses to produce or confirm faith. May such, in some degree, be the effect of this discourse. May you return to your houses, more convinced and affected with the wonderful attractions of the gospel. May you exclaim with the sacred poet, "O God, I rejoice in thy word as one that hath found great spoil. It shall be a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path. Thou hast made me to know the way of life. I shall ever be with thee; thou hast held me by thy right hand. Thou wilt guide me by thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory!"

We add to this discourse the following from the "Discours Nouveaux," to show that the rejection of Jesus Christ amounts to practical atheism.

And who is he whom God hath sent? What is it to believe on him? And what connection is there between that belief and the love of God? What connection? It probably escapes, in the first instance, the greater part of the hearers of Jesus Christ, but it will not escape them always, and certainly it cannot escape us. He whom God hath sent is his well-beloved, his Son, his Other Self; it is himself in a person like unto us; a man, perfectly man, a God, perfectly God. To believe on him, is not simply to believe what we have just said, but to believe that he hath been sent to us, given to us; it is to believe that the supreme object of the Father's love, he whose very name of Son worthily characterizes his nature, the perfection of glory, embracing in a boundless love the whole human race, has clothed himself with our mortal flesh, in order to be our Redeemer from death, our Representative, our Surety and Intercessor. Take away, by a mournful supposition, take away Jesus Christ from the world, with his might of compassion, and his title of Saviour, and by consequence, replace humanity where Jesus Christ found it, before an unknown God, the God of Sinai, enveloped in thick clouds, penetrated here and there, only by threatening flashes of lightning; or before the God of the philosophers,—power without personality, essence without feeling, gulf of existence, terror of the imagination and the heart; or, finally, before two closed gates, one of which is the gate of perdition, the other that of annihilation.* Yes, replace humanity where Jesus

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* It may be thought singular that the God of the philosophers should generally be an impersonal God, a God either so spiritual, or so material, that he cannot be separated, even in idea, from the universe he has made; a God so infinite, and so creative, that without volition or determination of the will, he must ever produce whatever exists in what we call the creation, throwing off continually, as from an exhaustless centre, all beings, and all modes of being; a God so perfect and absolute, that he has, properly speaking, neither mind nor body, but is all mind and all body, and not only so, but blends and absorbs all finite existences, material and immaterial, in his own boundless essence. According to this view, men and angels, with all material things, are but the necessary and outward manifestation of God, a part therefore of God, shadowy and imperfect, and destined, in due time, to return unto God. So that He only exists as the infinite and eternal Me, " power without personality, essence without feeling, gulf of existence (*gouffre des existences*), terror of the imagination and the heart."

It may be deemed singular, we say, that philosophers have generally formed this conception of God, which, by the way, is the idea of the more dreamy and speculative systems of pagan idolatry, and easily harmonizes with the grossest superstition on the one hand, and the deepest sensualism on the other. But when we look into the matter more narrowly, it will not appear so strange as at the first view. For those who reject revelation, necessarily reject the idea of an absolute creation, and a superintending Providence, truths which lie at the basis of all correct theology; and hence, they plunge at once into that ocean of difficulties, where all the speculations of ancient heathen philosophy were engulfed and lost. Assuming the axiom, *ex nihilo, nihil fit*, " from nothing, nothing is made," which is true in one sense, though not in another, true perhaps in an absolute, but not in a relative sense, that is to say, true

Christ found it, and say to that humanity, Love God, if there be a God, love him if he be just, love him if he

when applied generally, but not true in reference to God, and the possibility of his creating separate substances or essences, whether minds or bodies, in a way not explained, or perhaps capable of being explained to us; assuming this, the philosophers referred to make creation a necessary, and not a voluntary act of God, and represent matter as a mere modification of himself. Here then the distinction between God and his creation, between spirit and matter, vanishes, leaving but one substance, one essence or being, in existence, which may be called God, Nature, or the Universe, as individuals may please. Dr. Norton, in his Essay on the Latest Form of Infidelity, states, apparently on good authority, "that the celebrated Pantheist, Spinoza, composed the work in which his opinions are most fully unfolded, in the Dutch language, and committed it to his friend, the physician Mayer, to translate into Latin; that where the name *God* now appears, Spinoza had written *Nature;* but that Mayer induced him to substitute the former word for the latter, in order partially to screen himself from the odium to which he might be exposed."

Spinoza, as all will admit, is the father of modern Pantheism, the high-priest in reality of transcendental and mystical Atheism. He is much admired by the Hegelians, and even by the Eclectics, of whom Cousin is the most distinguished representative; and his works have recently been republished, and extensively circulated in Germany and France. In his *Posthumous Ethics*, he sets out with the proposition that "there cannot be two substances or essences"—that "substance is self-existent and infinite," and consequently, that there is "but one substance," which he calls God. "By God," says he, "I understand a being absolutely infinite, that is, a substance consisting of infinite attributes, every one of which expresses an infinite essence." (See Posthumous Ethics, Schol. in Prop. 8. Schol. in Prop. 10.) On this ground, God cannot, in the proper sense of the term, create; "for one substance cannot be produced by another substance." Hence, also, Spinoza denies all miracles, taking the very ground of Hume, that they are impossible; and so they are, if there be no independent and all-controlling God. "I will show from Scripture," he says, impiously referring to the word of God for authority, just as Satan did in a similar instance, "that the decrees and commands of God, and consequently his providence, are nothing but the order of nature." (Tractatus Theologico Politicus, Cap. VI.,—as quoted by Dr. Norton in his *Latest Form of Infidelity.*) Views similar to these loves you! From the depths of those palpitating hearts, you will hear uttered a thousand anxious cries, cries incessantly checked. Yes, God loves us; but what if he should not love me! Yes, God is just, but if he is just, he is formidable, and how can I love him; and if not just, he is not to be revered, and how can I love him? God exists, that is clearer than the light of the sun; God is good, since he is God; but if he is God, he is holy,—what can I thence conclude, what can I hope? What does he will? What has he resolved? Can I love him simply because he is worthy of love? Can I love him if he does not love me? Can I love one who perhaps hates me. Can I love in such uncertainty? And must not God first set my heart at liberty in order that I may run in the way of his commandments?

I represent thoughtful and not frivolous men speaking

are taken by some of our New England Transcendentalists; so that R. W. Emerson and Theodore Parker deny all inspiration and miracles, and though the latter continues to preach, and even to pray, the former has wisely abandoned both, as unphilosophical and useless.

This, then, is the God of the philosophers; a God without volition, without affection, without righteousness, without even personality,—a mere idea, a transcendental and pantheistic fancy; and not "the Lord our God," who is "above all, through all, and in all," the Father and Saviour of the human family. Oh, it is fearful to think, that it is an all-controlling and omnipotent God that the philosophers reject. "We are free," says one of them, (Heine in the *Kirche-Zeitung*, Feb., 1839, quoted in the *Biblical Repertory*,) "and need no thundering tyrant. We are of age, and need no fatherly care. We are not the handiwork of any great mechanic. Theism is a religion for slaves, for children, for Genevese, for watch-makers."

Do we start back with horror from the God of the philosophers? What then? Are we infidels still? Or do we accept the God of revelation? But he is just,—he punishes sin,—he has concluded all in unbelief. He demands the heart, the life, the all; and how can we give it, unless we are forgiven, reconciled, and born again?—T.

thus ; the latter perhaps imagine they love God, for the very reason, perhaps quite obvious in their view, that God is worthy of love because he is God. But mankind generally are not frivolous, they are serious, and have proved it. Their religions, opposed to the principle we have recognized, do not bind man to God ; they do not breathe the spirit of love, they do not inspire it nor propagate it ; they rather propagate dread of the name of God, and clearly testify what, in our present condition of uncertainty and perplexity, is our natural instinct and inevitable tendency. Enough exists to impel these presumptuous men, at least to doubt, whether it is natural to love God. But let them retire within themselves, and interrogate their own thoughts. They speak of loving God ; but do they know well what it is to love God ? Do they reflect that God requires that he should be loved as God ? There are terrors, there are abysses in that single word ; a world intervenes between their thoughts and the truth. That pagan philosopher was more serious than they, and knew better the real condition of humanity, who, either with indifference or grief, I know not which, exclaimed, " It is impossible to love God !"

But is the world, let them proceed to say, is the world so worthy of love, that it ought rather than God to possess our heart ? Is the world more attractive than God ?

If such were the question here, the intellect has already decided it ; but the will does not immediately follow. The intellect is prompt, very prompt ; it seizes, at a single glance, eternal verities ; but the flesh is slow, and lingers behind. In our present condition, we do not need to be told, detach yourselves from the world, to be able to love God; but, cleave to God, to be able to detach yourselves from the world. The attraction of the world is always experienced; we feel it without an effort of the will; it is in resisting it that we must use our will. But the attraction of God, in our actual situation, is felt only by our intellect, and penetrates no further. We must first of all love God, which depends not on our will, because we cannot love an object in which we do not find our happiness. God must first reveal himself to us as the supreme happiness, and not merely as the supreme perfection and the sovereign law. Even then a great number, perhaps, will not love him; but certain it is, that before knowing him in this character, none will love him; and if any one among men is capable of loving, he will love him thenceforth or never. He certainly will love him who, haunted by the recollection of his transgressions, overwhelmed by the pressure of the law, consumed with sorrow for his lost inheritance, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, that is, for God himself, when he sees him revealed with all the characteristics of certainty, as a God merciful and gracious, a father, and not a judge, nay, more than a father, as a compassionate, devoted and tender brother!

Either the human heart is incapable, from its nature, of feeling love, or that man will feel it who, enveloped in ignominy as a garment, has seen the God of glory descending even to him, to seek him in the depths of his disgrace; who, from the gloom and sorrow in which his conscience kept him plunged, has seen himself transported into a region of light and happiness; who, in respect to himself, has seen verified that amazing language of the prophet, "In all their afflictions he was afflicted;" who has seen,—O mystery, O miracle!—his God travelling by his side, in the rugged path of life; nay, voluntarily assuming the burden which was crushing him; a God humbled, a God weeping, a God anguished, a God dying!* That long contest, if I may dare to say it, that agony of God for generations, that painful birth, by which humanity was brought forth to the life of heaven, has been revealed to him in the ancient dispensation; he has been shown the very steps of God impressed upon the dust of ages, and mingled with the footprints of the human race; but at the trace which that God has left on the rock of Calvary, the rock of his heart is broken, the veil of his understanding torn away; and what he could never think of without temerity, he thenceforth conceives as necessary, that if God has thus loved humanity, he ought to love it as God has done, that is to say, with the same spirit, and in the same manner. What, then, will he do? None will ever love God, or that man will love him; that man will never love God, or he will love him from this hour. Who can conceive of any means of producing love superior to this? What could God, yes God himself, do more? What could he give, after having given himself? That man, then, has only to believe in order to love; and because he loves, the works he will thenceforth perform shall be works of God.

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* The translator must here take the liberty of repeating what has been already said in a former note, to which he would refer his readers, and remind them that where our author refers to God, as "weeping, anguished and dying," he refers to "God manifest in the flesh," in other words, to Jesus Christ, as human and divine. It is expressly said by the prophet, with regard to the infinite Jehovah himself, that "in all their afflictions he was afflicted;" and it may not be as unphilosophical as some persons imagine, to represent the Divine Mind as sympathizing in the profoundest manner, with the struggles and sufferings of humanity. There is deeper meaning than rationalists wot of in the words of the apostle, "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But *God* commendeth *his love* towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." We are said to *die*, when body and spirit separate; but the spirit does not perish. It sympathizes in the agony of dissolution, but it lives on, as perfect as ever. So the Divinity in Jesus Christ may have sympathized, in a manner inexplicable to us, with the anguish of his death, and yet lived on, in immutable perfection and blessedness.

GRACE AND LAW.

"By grace ye are saved."—EPH. ii. 5.

IN no language is there a more attractive word than *grace;* in the gospel, there is none more offensive to the men of the world. The idea of being saved by grace offends their pride, shocks their reason. And they prefer, a thousand times, to the word grace, so sweet and touching, that of law, so formidable and severe. They desire us to speak to them of the precepts of the gospel, of the morality of the gospel; but they are not pleased when we call their attention to the gratuitous pardon it announces. We shall not, at present, explain the causes of this predilection and of this repugnance, which appear to contradict the deepest tendencies of human nature. But we shall endeavor to show that, so far from these two things, grace and law, being irreconcilable, the one conducts necessarily to the other; that the law conducts to grace, and grace, in its turn, leads back to the law.

After we have deduced this truth from the very nature of things, we shall appeal to experience, and enable you to see that whosoever truly admits the one never fails to admit also the other. Thus, if it should please God to aid us, one of the principal objections which the world raises against the gospel will be removed.

I say, then, that the law conducts naturally to grace. To convince you of this, will you consider the law with reference to four things, or four points of view which it offers to our contemplation—its nature, its extent, its authoritative character, and finally, its sanction or guaranty.

If you consider the nature of this law, you will see that the question has little to do with ceremonies, customs, and external performances. Upon this point there is no difference of opinion. If these things were commanded by Heaven, they would doubtless form a part of our duties. But the law, such as Christians and even pagans conceive of it, is the moral law, the law which subjects the life to the conscience. And this law commands us, not merely to act justly, but to be just; not only to do right, but to feel right; that is to say, it demands our heart.

As to the *extent* of this law, a word will suffice; it is the law of perfection. He who understands it, resembles that hero so frequently celebrated in history, who believed that he had done nothing, so long as anything remained for him to do. No relation of his life, no moment of his career, no part of his duty, can be withdrawn from this universal empire of the moral law. To obey in everything, to obey always, to obey perfectly, such is the unchangeable rule of his conduct.*

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* That this is a just view is evident from the fact that perfection, which is the absence of all sin, and the possession of all virtue, is absolutely necessary to our happiness. God cannot require less of his creatures than what will secure their permanent well-being. The spirits of just men made perfect, and the angels of God, are happy because they are holy. They "obey in everything, obey always, obey perfectly." Hence we are enjoined to pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Our heavenly Father, then, has given us a perfect law, in order that he

In the third place, this is not a mere choice, a plan, or a calculation, on his part; he is bound to the law by the chains of an imperious and absolute obligation. In his eyes, the only thing necessary is to obey. Happiness, power, life, are not the end, but the means of fulfilling the moral law. The question with him is not about enjoyment, or power, or life, but about obedience. The laws of nature may change, those of duty remain. The universe may dissolve, the moral law continues. In the confusion of all things, and amid universal disorder, the will to do right does not cease to belong to him; and his activity would fail of its objects, and his efforts of their end, if he did not forever feel under obligation to be righteous.

That he may never forget it, a *sanction* is attached to the law. Happiness has been invariably attached to obedience, misery to disobedience. On earth, disgust, remorse, and terror, indicate to rebellious man the most terrible punishments concealed in the shadows of the future. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against every soul of man that doeth evil."

Try to deduct anything from this formidable enumeration; try, and you will see, with each attempt, the burden aggravated by new weights. Say that obedience

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may secure for us a perfect felicity. He has forbidden all wrong, he enjoins all virtue; for all wrong is injurious, all virtue is beneficial. One sin, sanctioned or permitted, one virtue, neglected or not commanded, would tarnish our felicity, and introduce disorder into the divine administration. The law, then, is the law of perfection. It has no limits but those of possibility. It forbids all sin, it enjoins all purity, in thought, word, and deed. Like its author, it is "holy, just, and good," and therefore immutable and eternal. If, then, it bears severely upon us, if it condemns us utterly and irrevocably, this only proves that we need pardon and regeneration.—T.

has its limits, and we shall ask you to point them out. Say that a compromise may be made between heaven and earth, and we shall demand, by virtue of what authority you dare to make such a compromise. Say that each man has his standard, and we shall inquire of each one of you, if he has reached that standard. Say that God has no need of your sacrifices, we shall wish to know if the commandments of God are regulated by his needs; and we shall compel you to acknowledge, that on such a supposition, God would not command anything, since assuredly God has no need of anything. Say that many of the duties imposed upon you are doubtful; but whence come the greater part of these doubts, if not from your reluctance to obey? Moreover, do you fulfil those duties of which you do not doubt? Say that obedience is impossible; but show us how, while you find it impossible, it yet appears to you highly reasonable; show us why your conscience persists in declaring authoritative a law which your experience declares impracticable; show us why, after each transgression, you have in vain said, I could not have done otherwise; and why remorse does not cry the less vehemently in your soul. Remove this contradiction, if you can; as for us, we cannot remove it.

To present to God our bodies and spirits a living and holy sacrifice; to devote to him our whole life; to seek nothing but his approbation; "to love our neighbor as ourselves; to use the world as not abusing it;"—such is a feeble sketch, a rapid outline of the divine law. Let others seek to efface, to obliterate the distinctive features; we shall deepen the impression. Let them seek to lighten the burden, we shall press it with all our might. We shall, if possible, overwhelm with it the presumptuous creature who seeks to shake it off, in order that, under the oppressive weight of this terrible and inexorable law, he may utter that desirable and salutary cry which implores grace, and to which the gospel alone has responded.

If, then, you have formed a just idea of the moral law, if you have accepted it, not enfeebled and mutilated, but in all its strictness and majesty, you will acknowledge yourselves violators of that divine law. You will feel yourselves capable neither of fulfilling all its precepts together, nor even one of them in a manner full and perfect; and in the profound conviction of your misery and danger, you will either abandon yourselves to an inconsolable despair, or you will cast yourselves at the foot of the eternal throne, and beg grace and pardon from the Judge of your life.

It is thus the law leads to grace. But observe particularly that I have not said that the law explains grace. The work of redemption is a mystery, and will always remain a mystery; the gospel itself only announces it, does not explain it. All I meant to say is, that to him who contemplates the holy image of the law, there is an imperious necessity to rely on grace or perish in his sins.

It is at this point that St. Paul has again exclaimed, "Do we make void the law, through faith? God forbid! yea, we establish law." This is the second truth we have announced; grace, in its turn, leads back to the law.

In the first place, you will consider that grace, as it is manifested in the gospel, is the most august homage, the most solemn consecration, which the law can receive. This grace is of a peculiar character. It is not the soft indulgence, and the easy indifference of a feeble father, who, tired of his own severity, shuts his eyes to the faults of a guilty child. It is not the weakness of a timid government, which, unable to repress disorder, lets the laws sleep, and goes to sleep along with them. It is a holy goodness; it is a love without feebleness, which pardons guilt, and executes justice, at the same time. It is not possible, that God, who is the supreme sanction of order, should tolerate the shadow of disorder, and leave unpunished the least infraction of the holy laws he has given. Thus, in the work of which we speak, condemnation appears in the pardon, and pardon in the condemnation. The same act proclaims the compassion of God, and the inflexibility of his justice.

God could not save us without assuming our nature, nor assume our nature without sharing our misery. The cross, the triumph of grace, is the triumph of law. Penetrate this great mystery, and you will acknowledge that nothing is more beyond reason, and yet nothing more conformed to it. Among all the inventions of men, you will seek in vain for another idea, which exhibits in harmony all the attributes which compose the perfection of God.*

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* To every unsophisticated reader of the Scriptures, nothing can be more evident, than the sacrificial, or substitutionary character of our Saviour's sufferings. That Christ was sinless, all will admit; that he was treated as if he were a sinner; that he was thus treated by the appointment of God, as well as his own voluntary choice, and that his sufferings were a part of a great scheme, devised by infinite wisdom, for the redemption of man, will also be acknowledged. Moreover, that he suffered for us, suffered what we ought to have suffered a thousand times over, but which we could not have suffered, without utter perdition, and that God accepts his sufferings, not as a full or commercial equivalent for our punishment, but as an expiation, or atonement for

Thus, then, in the idea of evangelical grace, the moral law is found highly glorified. Why should it not be found equally glorified, in the hearts of those who receive grace? How can we believe seriously in that bloody expiation, without perceiving all that is

our sins, on the ground of which, our faith in Christ is accounted for righteousness, and procures for us pardon and eternal life, will scarcely be denied by any serious and candid believer in divine revelation "He who knew no *sin* was *made sin* for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Here then is the sinless suffering for the sinful, the innocent dying for the guilty; and if this be not sacrifice, expiation, substitution, we know not what is. The case indeed is peculiar. There is nothing like it, there can be nothing like it, in the transactions of men. But the infinite Jehovah, the supreme sovereign of the universe, the source and embodiment of all law, as well as of all grace, may accept such a sacrifice, in place of the direct execution of his laws, and present it to the world, as his selected plan for the salvation of the guilty. Thus is he "just," and yet "the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." The fitness and efficiency of such an appointment are shown in its effects. *A priori* it might seem foolishness, but experience has proved it to be the power of God, and the wisdom of God, not only for the relief, but for the reformation of them that believe. Our author, then, is justified in speaking of the cross of Christ as an exhibition of justice and of grace. While it relieves the conscience of the sinner from the burden of guilt, and inspires him with an immortal hope, it strikes a death-blow at his sin, and penetrates his heart with gratitude and love. "A cold and sceptical philosophy," says Robert Hall, Works, Vol I., p. 277, "may suggest specious cavils against the doctrines of revelation upon this subject; cavils which derive all their force, not from the superior wisdom of their authors, but solely from the inadequacy of human reason to the full comprehension of heavenly mysteries. But still there is a simple grandeur in the fact, that God has *set forth his Son to be a propitiation*, sufficient to silence the impotent clamors of sophistry, and to carry to all serious and humble men a firm conviction, that the law is exalted, and the justice of God illustriously vindicated and asserted by such an expedient. To minds of that description, the immaculate purity of the divine character, its abhorrence of sin, and its inflexible adherence to moral order, will present themselves in the cross, in a more impressive light than in any other object."—T odious in sin, vowing towards it a profound hatred, and desiring, if I may so express it, to do honor to that ineffable and unmerited grace? What! has Christ died for our sins, and can we love our sins? What! has Christ died because there is a law, and shall we not feel ourselves bound to redouble, and constantly to renew, our respect for the law? Human nature must have lost all its essential traits, all the fibres of the heart must have been broken, when the conviction of so great a benefit has failed to excite all our love; and it would be a strange love, which did not produce obedience. He who says in his heart, "Let us sin, that grace may abound," must be a man who has neither understood nor received grace; for the natural and reasonable conclusion is this, since grace abounds, let us sin no more! Thus, as I said at the commencement of these remarks, grace leads back to the law.

I say more than this; I say that it alone leads thither. Of this you will have no doubt, if you consider attentively what the law is. The law is not perfectly fulfilled, except by love. But love is not commanded, it is inspired. The severest injunctions, and the most formidable threatenings, could not create in the soul a single emotion of tenderness to God; love alone gives birth to love. Thus, as long as we have before us only the law with its threatenings, we do not fulfil it in the spirit by which it ought to be fulfilled, that is, we do not fulfil it at all. The gospel has said that, "love casteth out fear;" it is also just to say, that fear casteth out love; for we cannot love when we fear. It is the privilege and glory of the gospel, to give to the soul enlargement and freedom; grace being proclaimed, and fear banished, we dare love, we can love. "I will run in the way of thy commandments," says the Psalmist, "when thou shalt enlarge my heart." The heart opens and expands, under the gentle warmth of divine love and the sweet rays of hope. Obedience becomes joyous; it is no longer a painful effort, but a spontaneous and involuntary soaring of the renovated soul. As the waves of a river, once impelled in the direction of their channel, do not require every moment a new impulse, to continue therein, so the life, which has received the impulse of love, is borne away entire, and with rapid waves, towards the ocean of the divine will, where it loves to be swallowed up and lost. Thus perfect obedience is the fruit only of love, and love is the fruit only of grace.

This idea receives additional force, from a more complete view of grace. Grace is something more than pardon; pardon is only the inauguration of grace. God exercises grace towards us, when he forgives our sins; and he exercises it again, when he acts upon our hearts, to incline, and form them to obedience; or, if you prefer it so, when he cherishes and perpetuates the first impressions we have received from his mercy; when he incessantly awakens in us the recollection, the idea, the feeling of these impressions; when he prevents the dust and gravel from obstructing the blessed fountain he has caused to spring from the rock, cleft asunder by his divine hand. All this he has promised; all this he has pledged to us; all this, then, is grace. But what effect will such promises, such assurance have upon the heart, but to soften and encourage it? What disposition will he be likely to cherish towards God, who knows not only that God has loved him once, but that he loves him always, that he thinks of him, provides for him, watches over him continually, conducts him gently and carefully, as a shepherd conducts one of his flock, from the mountain to the plain, bears him in his arms, and caresses him, as a nurse bears and caresses a child; in a word, to borrow the language of Scripture, "is afflicted in all his afflictions?"* This, we repeat, is grace! Is it, or is it not, favorable to the law? In other words, is it adapted to develop, or is it only fitted to stifle in us, the principle of love?

Who, having considered the nature of the law and of grace, can now say, that law and grace are incompatible? The matter is beyond dispute. But we have a corroboration of this truth in experience. It fully confirms what reason has already proved.

In the first place, we affirm that those who admit grace, admit also the law. Here, it is quite evident, we do not speak of that dry dogmatism, that dead orthodoxy, which is no more Christianity, than a statue is a man. We grant that there is a way of receiving the doctrines of the church, which leaves them without influence upon the life. But we speak only of those whose Christianity is vital, of those who have accepted grace with the same feeling that a shipwrecked mariner seizes the saving plank, which is to sustain him above the waves and carry him to the shore. Well, have you remarked, that those Christians by conviction and feeling, who confess that they are saved only by grace, have less respect than others for the law? On the contrary, have you not observed that what distinguishes them, is precisely their attachment and zeal for the law? And yet, strange to tell! some have succeeded, by means of certain sophisms, in spreading the idea that the doctrine of such Christians is subversive of morality, that their faith is a pillow of security, that it extinguishes the necessity for good works, and opens the door to every vice. But their conduct has refuted all these sophisms. The flesh might say, let us sin, for grace abounds; but the spirit teaches them a very different logic. It is true, they expect everything from grace, but they labor as if they expected everything from themselves. In the world we are surprised to see men, who long since have made their fortune, rising early and retiring late, and eating the bread of carefulness, as if they had yet their fortune to make. Well, then, those of whom we are speaking have also made their fortune,—they are saved,—they say so; but everything which a man would do, who thus far had not the least assurance of his salvation, they do assiduously and without ceasing. And they not only labor, but they pray; they supplicate the Spirit to sustain them in their feebleness; with fervor they exclaim, "Oh, who shall deliver us from this body of death?" With the great apostle they repeat, "As for me, I have not yet reached the goal; but this I do, leaving the things that are behind, and pressing to those that are before, I advance to the goal, to the prize of the heavenly calling of God in Christ Jesus." In a word, the conduct of these disciples of Christ is such, that it would be difficult to find among the partisans of the law a single individual as careful to bridle his tongue, to repress the risings of passion, to observe every *iota* of the law, and to fill up his life with good works. And yet they attach to none of their works the hope of their salvation. What proof can be stronger that grace and law are by no means contradictory!

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* Isaiah lxiii. 14, lxvi. 12, lxiii. 9.

If it is true, that those who admit grace, admit also the law, it is, unhappily, no less true, that those who do not admit grace, do not admit the law. This assertion will not surprise us, if we recollect what the law is, and what it is to admit it. Who, in the elevated and spiritual sense we have given to these expressions, admit the law, who wish to do so, completely? Not those certainly who reject grace. Everywhere among the children of the world, the law of God is taken at a discount. Each accepts of it whatever he finds proportioned to his powers, and convenient to his circumstances; each makes a law according to his own standard. Morality changes its form and dimensions with each individual. And, what is especially worthy of notice, in this connection, is that they make only those sacrifices to the law which cost them nothing, those indeed which are no sacrifices at all. But each appears to demand favor for every cherished inclination, for every reserved vice, for every idol he has not the courage to break; the avaricious man for the mania of gain and accumulation, the sensual for the indulgences he cannot renounce, the vain for the distinctions by which he is flattered. In a word, behind conscience, and amid the deep shadows of the soul, each cherishes, perhaps unknown to himself, some idolatrous altar. It is this which explains the strange preference which worldlings give to the law over grace. Never would they prefer the law, if they saw it entire; and they prefer it only because the delicate point, the wounding point, if I may so express myself, remains hidden from them, and only its flattering aspects, its smooth sides, its easy duties are familiar to their minds. But with whom do you find this disposition to attenuate the law, or rather this incapacity to admit it? With the partisans of grace, or with those who reject grace? With the disciples of the world, or with the children of the gospel?

But are there not, you will say to me, even among those who do not admit salvation by grace, men penetrated with the holiness of the law, and desirous of fulfilling it? Ah! my friends, you speak of a class of men very remarkable, and very interesting. There are men, I am far from denying, to whom God appears to manifest himself as he did to Moses on Sinai, with all the majesty of a lawgiver and a judge. By a celestial favor, which may be called a commencement of grace, they have felt the grandeur, necessity, and inflexibility of the moral law, and at the same time, have believed themselves capable of realizing it in their lives. Full of this idea they have set themselves to work; now retrenching, now adding, now correcting;—ever occupied with the desire of perfection, they have subjected their souls and bodies to the severest discipline. But when they have seen that the task had no end, the process no result; when one vice extirpated has only enabled them to discover another; when after all these corrections in detail, the sum of the life and the foundation of the soul were not essentially changed; that the old man was still there, in his ill-disguised decrepitude, that the disease of which they had to relieve themselves, was not a disease, but death itself; that the great thing at issue, was not how to be cured, but how to live; when, in a word, they have seen that their labor did not bring peace, and at the same time, have felt their craving for peace increasing with the efforts they made to satisfy it,—then was verified in them what Jesus Christ has said, "Whosoever will do the will of my Father, shall know whether my doctrine come from God, or from man." Yes, that doctrine which is nothing else than grace, they have acknowledged as one which proceeds from the good and holy God; as the only key to the enigma which torments them. They have embraced it with affection; they have sold all to purchase "that pearl of great price;" and have thereby once more proved what we seek to establish, that "the law is a schoolmaster, leading to Christ;" and that by the road of the law, we arrive at grace. A great number of conversions which rejoice the church have no other history.

Thus, if there are among us those who have not yet resolved to accept salvation from God, as a gratuitous gift, as the price of the sufferings of Jesus Christ, I will state the reason of it without circumlocution. It is because they do not yet know the law. They may speak, if they will, of righteousness, of perfection, and even of love; there are many things of a terrestrial nature to which they might apply each of these words; it is long since human language has rashly usurped the words of the language of Heaven. But how far is that which they call righteousness, perfection, and love, from what our Lord has denominated such! Ah! if they had but the faintest idea, and the feeblest desire of perfection; if the august image of regeneration, of the life in God, did but once shine upon their minds, what a revolution would be made in their ideas! how life would change its aspect in their eyes! how their views of happiness and of misery would be suddenly displaced! How little would everything be to them, in comparison with that peace of God to which they did not expect to come, but by way of the law! When, after having panted, for a long time, under the iron yoke of the law, and traced, in the field of duty, so many barren furrows, they should see shining upon them, at last, the divine promise, when the Desire of nations, the Desire of their hearts, should present himself before their eyes, with the touching dignity of Mediator ; when he should teach them to breathe the gentle name of Father, which their lips could never before utter ; when they should see the links of an ineffable communion, formed between their unhappy souls, and the eternal Spirit, O then would they love, would they comprehend, would they accept that grace which to-day is to them only an object of scandal and derision ! Open their eyes, O Lord, to the majestic splendors of thy holy law, to the sweet and tender light of thy compassion ! Penetrate them with a reverence for thy commands, and then with love for thy love. Lead them by the road of the law, to the secure port, the eternal asylum of thy grace in Jesus Christ !

MAN DEPRIVED OF ALL GLORY BEFORE GOD.

"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."*—Rom. iii. 23

FIRST DISCOURSE

The two truths, to which we invite your attention to-day, have not met the same fate in the world. The first is not disputed; there is no one who does not acknowledge that "all men have sinned;" but there are few persons disposed to admit that "man is deprived of all glory before God."

There is such an agreement as to the first of these propositions, that it would not be necessary to dwell upon it, if those who are unanimous in receiving it, did not strangely differ from one another, and sometimes even from themselves, touching the extent and meaning of this declaration. Some of them regard sin as essentially a negative thing; that is, as an absence, a want, a defect; in their belief, no element of positive evil resides in the heart of man. Others, on the contrary, believe that sin consists in a direct preference of evil to good; that vice in man is not a weakness, but a depraved force; that the will is not seduced, but corrupted. You hear some explain sin as an accident of human nature; the result of the action of external circumstances upon the soul. Evil, according to them, does not proceed from the soul, but comes to it; the soul receives it, does not produce it. Again, you hear others maintain that the germ of sin is in the heart; that it seeks occasion to manifest itself; that everything may become an occasion to it, and that man is not a sinner by accident, but by nature. The one class, while recognizing, in the heart of man, a tendency to evil, regard that tendency as a primitive law of his being, an interior force, rivalling the moral element which gives it an opportunity of displaying its force, and triumphing with so much greater merit and honor. The others maintain that God has not made evil; that an adversary has come and sown impure tares among our wheat; and that harmony, not combat, is the regular and healthy state of every soul.

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* French translation—"Deprived of all glory before God."

Reason sheds very little light upon all these questions. How many philosophers and profound thinkers have they not already completely defeated! Nevertheless, from all the intricacies of logic, and from the hands of all the sophists, one truth has always escaped, intact, entire, and invincible; it is, that men have sinned; that all, more or less, live in disorder; that, as long as they are in the flesh, they are enveloped in sin; and that, by an inexplicable contrast, they join, with the consciousness of their servitude or captivity, an irresistible feeling of guilt and responsibility.

As to a more perfect knowledge of the nature, the extent, and the consequences of sin, we shall never obtain it, unless we have recourse to the Christian revelation. This revelation does not confine itself to saying that all men have sinned; it throws a vivid light upon this declaration by the words which terminate my text: "They are deprived of all glory before God." To every one who adopts this second sentence, the meaning of the first becomes perfectly clear and precise. It is then to prove that man has no subject of glory before God that we are to apply it.

We have already said, that this declaration meets with more who deny it than the first. What does it, in fact, mean? It means that man has nothing in him which he can urge as a distinction in the eyes of God, as a merit or a defence; nothing which can, in itself, assure us of his good-will. Is not this truth disputed?

We by no means dispute it, some will say; for it is quite evident that all we are we owe to God; our good qualities are his work; and, in this view, the most virtuous man is included with all others in the application of this sentence: "They are deprived of all occasion of glory before God."

We admit it willingly, and the apostle himself would equally admit it. It was St. James who said to the primitive Christians, "Every good gift and every perfect gift cometh down from the Father of lights;" he alone produces in us the power both to will and to act, according to his good pleasure. "What have we that we have not received from him; and if we have received it, why do we boast as if we had not received it?" But it is clear that it is from another point of view that the apostle reasons in the chapter where our text is found, and that it has another meaning than the one which these persons would give it.

It is not merely a *homage* which the apostle would render to the author of every perfect gift; it is a condemnation he would pronounce. Upon whom? Upon man in every condition? No, but upon man unregenerate, upon man in his natural state. And the expression of the apostle evidently signifies that as long as man has not accepted the benefit of the redemption by Jesus Christ, he is, with relation to God, in a state of reprobation, from which he has in himself absolutely nothing that can deliver him. This proposition, I believe, will find a considerable number of opponents.

We do not wish to burden this sentence with what evidently does not belong to it. We do not wish to confound two distinct spheres. In the presence of his fellow-man, man is not absolutely without glory. Man can offer to man something to be admired and praised, or at least to be respected. Indeed, it would be to belie our own consciousness, and place ourselves in an untenable position, in all cases to refuse a sentiment of approbation to the conduct of our fellow-creatures. In other words, man is frequently forced to recognize in man something which he is obliged to call virtue.

Virtue he discovers and recognizes not merely in the Christian, whose moral nature has been renewed by the gospel, but in others. Far from all admiration being confined to that quarter, the admiration of men, nay more, of Christians, is frequently directed towards the natural or unregenerate man. Whatever may be the harsh assertions of an ill-understood orthodoxy, it is certain that the Christian who is the most disposed, in theory, to refuse all reality and all value to human virtues, every moment contradicts himself in practice. A benefit received from one of his fellow-men moves his heart; he speaks of gratitude, he is, in reality, grateful; that is to say, he recognizes, in his benefactor, a benevolent and disinterested intention; he attributes to the action, for which he has occasion to rejoice, another value than the personal profit he derives from it, an intrinsic, or a moral value. His benefactor is something else in his eyes than a tree, well planted, which bears spontaneously good fruits; he sees in him a generous will, which, without being incited from without, has used its capacity and means to procure an advantage to a sensitive being. I know, indeed, that a narrow system may, at length, re-act upon the soul, and reduce it to its own standard, but it cannot tear from the soul those instincts so deeply rooted in it. And all that such a system can do, with reference to the essential nature of the soul, is to reduce it to silence, but not to stifle it.

In favor of the reality of human virtue, in some degree, we boldly invoke the testimony of all men, if not their express and voluntary testimony, at least that sudden and irresistible testimony which may be called the voice of nature. We shall obtain from them a testimony even more explicit than this, if we can, for a moment, induce them to descend into the arena where the facts wait to be combated. Of these facts we shall, without hesitation, abandon to them a great number. We shall consent to reject, as far from the sphere of virtuous actions, all those which may be explained by custom or prejudice; all those in reference to which, interest, gross or delicate, may have played a part; all those which the applause of men might or could follow. They may do with such actions what they please; we defend them not; our cause can dispense with them. But as to those in which virtue can be explained only by virtue,—those which have been performed far from the eyes of man, and without any reasonable hope of ever attracting their attention,—those which, so far from having been able to count upon their suffrage, had in prospect only their contempt,—those in which opprobrium could not be converted into glory by the enthusiastic adherence of a certain number of partisans,—those, in a word, which never could have existed, unless there had been in the hearts of their authors an idea of duty, or a sentiment of disinterestedness; all such they must leave us; and however small may be their number, and however widely separated by great distances on the earth, and by centuries of time, we believe that they sufficiently protest against a vain denial, and in their mournful rareness, prove the presence and perpetual action of a moral principle in the bosom of the human race.

We have, in this cause, the gospel itself in our favor. We see there the same writers who have taught us the entire fall and condemnation of man, unhesitatingly according to human virtues those praises which could not be accorded to them in a system which denies all moral value in the actions of men. It is true they acknowledged that, in an elevated sense, there is none righteous, no, not one; that none doeth good, no, not one; that all flesh has corrupted his way; but, after all, the same writers praise a barbarous people who received them, after their shipwreck, with much humanity (Acts xxviii. 2;) they return thanks for the affectionate care of a man, who, without knowing them, and without expecting anything from them, did them all the good their situation required (Acts xxviii. 7.) And St. Paul, the very one who takes away from man all occasion of glory before God, acknowledges in his Epistle to the Romans, that the Gentiles do naturally, at least in a certain measure, the things which are according to law, and by this means he shows, that what is written in the law is also written in their hearts. After these testimonies a Christian can have no difficulty in admitting a principle of action in man, different from that of self-interest; and this principle being once recognized and defined, it is of little consequence by what name it is called.

Singular thing! it is among the followers of Christianity, and among them only, that our position ought to find opponents. But we see rising against it, in the ranks of those who oppose Christianity, as great a number of adversaries. It is sometimes against the natural man that we have to defend the reality of natural virtues. It is before man himself that man can scarcely find favor. It is man that refuses to man the occasion of glory which we have not hesitated to accord to him. The very same persons who tax Christianity with misanthropy and exaggeration, when it proclaims the nothingness of human virtues, are often, in the practice of life, the most sceptical of all virtue. They demolish, stone by stone, the edifice which they are eager and in haste to re-construct, when the question is agitated about finding a retreat against the overpowering assertions of the gospel. Ready to defend against it, in general, the goodness, and even perfection of our nature, they contradict themselves, in detail, in a manner the most striking. To them all men are good, but each man is bad. Their distrust and caprice give credit to no action and to no man. Nothing beautiful or good escapes the corrosion of their cruel interpretations. They have in reserve for each good action a bitter and degrading explanation. When a beautiful fruit falls into their hands, their first idea is not to nourish themselves by it, but to find there the hidden worm which gnaws its interior. Thus their habitual practice belies their theory. But what shall be said of those who admit into their minds two contradictory theories; of those who, reproaching Christianity with the harshness of its doctrines, have adopted, according to their own estimate, opinions as harsh, and perhaps more so; of those who, analyzing the human heart, flatter themselves that they have discovered (happy discovery!) that all its fibres vibrate to that of selfishness; who ask man to sign with them the sentence of his own dishonor, and yet demand a glory in compensation for that which they have taken away from us? There are times when this bitter contempt of human nature, this denial of all moral worth in man, becomes a general belief, and almost a popular instinct. This is seen especially at the termination of great and cruel deceptions on society, when having, through faith in its leaders, given its adherence to seducing theories, confirmed by imposing words, it discovers that it has been deceived, and in the disgust which follows its previous intoxication, includes in an equal contempt all professions of faith, all protestations of benevolence, of justice, and devotion. The profanation of words leads to the contempt of things. In morality, as well as in religion, unbelief is the necessary re-action of hypocrisy. In the train of religious contests ordinarily comes religious scepticism; and wars of opinion, after an enormous expenditure of maxims, declamations, and protestations, end by giving birth to moral scepticism.

This kind of disgust which usually follows in the train of great social commotions, we produce at pleasure in ourselves, during quiet and ordinary times, by the general contemplation of society and the study of history. Those whom their individual relations might have led to accord some respect to humanity, in passing from individuals to the race, insensibly change their views. It is rare that in this aspect of mankind, the conviction of the degradation of human nature does not fasten itself strongly upon their soul. A conviction so much more painful, when identifying itself, so to speak, with the consciousness of the whole human race, they feel on its behalf an immense remorse. The guilt of the whole human family is heaped upon their conscience, as that of an accomplice. Their pride yields in spite of them to this humiliating fellowship; because, in view of so many transgressions, revealing in their own heart the hidden germ from which unhappy circumstances might cause the same iniquities to spring forth, they feel themselves condemned by the crimes of society, degraded by its degradation, humbled by its shame.*

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* If humanity is corrupted in the mass, it would certainly be very difficult to prove that it is pure in the details. If the race has fallen, surely individuals cannot be innocent. That there are among them diversities of character, some being better and some worse, at least with reference to certain aspects of character, none will deny; but that the taint of sin has, more or less, reached the heart of every man, all experience and observation go to prove. Even if an individual were conscious of some purity, ought not the very fact that he belongs to a degenerate race, to excite in him some suspicion as to his own integrity? Can he condemn the whole of his kind, and acquit himself? Can he look upon the wreck of humanity, and feel that he alone has escaped? Can he complacently say, Man is sinful, but I am holy; man is fallen, but I am safe? Impossible! For each man is a part of humanity, and must yield, in spite of himself, to that "humiliating fellowship." If he does not, if he separates himself from his fellow-sinners, and says, "Stand by, for I am holier than thou," what estimate is formed of him by others, and even by those who are the greatest sticklers for the natural innocence of man? Do they not denounce him as a pharisee or

This is not all. How, say they, confusedly, can generous juices circulate in a tree with that poisonous sap? And when, not only in the same nation, but also in the same individual, we see developed together the most ordinary vices by the side of the loftiest virtues, the most unnatural sentiments by the side of the noblest emotions, are we not led irresistibly to doubt the reality of good in the midst of so much evil; and, at the sight of these golden particles scattered in the mud, to suppose that this noble metal is not actually there, but that a singular play of light from above has, at times, given to some portions of the mud the appearance and glitter of gold? Let us examine, let us analyze, and we shall be surprised to see how many virtues are entirely false, how many actions, good in themselves, are dishonored by an unholy motive, how many others by an admixture of impurity. Let us demand from ourselves an account of our admiration; by tarnishing the principle, we tarnish the object. Let us inquire if the enthusiasm we have felt in view of great historical virtues was entirely pure, and if it had not for its principle, less the love of virtue than the love of glory. Let us inquire if virtue, stripped of every poetical circumstance, reduced to the persevering but uniform, the zealous but concealed observance of duties which spring from a vulgar

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a hypocrite? And do they not thus recognize the truth of what the Scriptures have said, that "there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God?" We cheerfully admit that man, though fallen, has a noble nature. It is a palace deserted. Enough of its primitive grandeur remains to prove that God once dwelt there. Its silence and desolation are mournful, but they are the silence and desolation of a majestic ruin, beautiful even in decay. Besides, the materials are entire, and may yet be re-constructed on a new founda tion, and once more attract the presence of the King of kings.—T.

position, if virtue under such a form, and the less suspected on that very account, does not inspire us with an interest comparatively feeble; and if this be not a sentiment quite as moral as that which transported us from that dull and gloomy horizon to a dazzling one, where great achievements and mighty intellectual powers enhanced in our eyes the qualities of great hearts. If our admiration thus permits itself to be corrupted, will virtue itself be incorruptible? If glory has deceived our enthusiasm, has it exerted less influence on the great actions which awakened it in us? And must we not place to its account a part, alas! a very great part of the virtues we admire?

You see, thus, that if the opposition of one class of religious men gives a defender of human virtues something to do, the opposition of another class of opponents subjects him to no less embarrassment. For we confess, that after the knowledge of human nature we believe ourselves to have acquired, we should, to-day, find a difficulty, if we wished to do anything more than save a few remains from the wreck. For we believe in the wreck of humanity; we believe that its unfortunate ship has perished; the remains of that great catastrophe float on the waves. A few of these are yet fit for some use, but none of them can bear to the shore the least of the passengers. Convinced fully that man is fallen, we cannot, however, admit that he has become an entire stranger to every moral sentiment; we think we can see, through his corruption, traces,—sometimes brilliant traces,—of justice and benevolence, to which we cannot refuse our admiration; in a word, we believe that man is not stripped of all occasion of glory before man.

Let man be satisfied with us; we have done him justice. Let him surround himself with these splendid rags; let him admire them; let him try to clothe and adorn his nakedness with them; we agree to it; we go farther;—we respect those rags, and we know why. But whatever high value he may place upon his proud indigence, what peace and hope can he derive from that incoherent and contradictory assemblage of the most extravagant moral elements; that will which acknowledges the law, yet tramples it under foot, which loves duty and yet hates it; that heart which receives with the same favor, and cherishes together, passions the most brutal, and devotion the most heroic? Will he persuade himself that all in him is good; or that the good can compensate for the bad; or that this mixture constitutes order itself, and that God wills the bad as well as the good? A craving for unity, stronger than all reasonings, appeals to him against it. An anguish stronger than all the consolations of a false wisdom, repeats to him that there is no safety but in unity. A confused sentiment warns him that a good which does not conquer the bad is not the true good; and that a virtue which leaves a vice to dwell by its side is not true virtue; that true virtue dwelling in the centre of the soul would exclude, by its very presence, everything which is not virtue; that what he has honored, under this name, is not then truly virtue, but its shadow or its remembrance; while a voice of condemnation resounds hoarsely, during the whole of his life, above the applauses which by turns he gives and receives. Cruel doubts! Frightful shadows! What will disperse you? What will shed upon the close of this gloomy career a consoling light? The light which will illumine the past will illumine also the future; that which will explain the evil will also indicate the cure; it is under the ruins of our ancient dwelling that we must seek the foundations of the new. Unity, light, and hope we find all at once, in the word which has said to all men without distinction, "Ye are stripped of all glory before God." Let us together consider that great truth.

MAN DEPRIVED OF ALL GLORY BEFORE GOD.

"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God."—Rom. iii. 23.

SECOND DISCOURSE

In a preceding discourse, we have said that man has some occasions of glory before man. Poor distinctions which he disputes to himself, and which, after a more attentive examination, he very often tears to pieces with a blush. Of what remains, of what ought not to be refused him, he cannot make a counterpoise to his misery; his shame, even in his own eyes, will always be greater than his glory. The general condition of humanity, even in eras of culture and in centres of civilization, always appears to him one of degradation and ruin. This is a conclusion to which he is almost infallibly conducted by a profound study of human affairs. It is a result also to which many good men are brought by the mere examination of their own hearts, and the rigorous analysis of their actions.* Such is the condition of man; such is his glory; let him take possession of it; but let him not stretch forth his hand to a higher glory, the glory which comes from God. This we absolutely refuse him.

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* It may be thought strange that, while good men readily confess their sinfulness, bad men generally deny it. Sceptics, it is found, are ordinarily proud and self-conceited. But some of them have been compelled to confess their conscious weakness and imperfection. Few men were probably more calmly and proudly self-conceited than Goethe, who, with a clear and majestic intellect, had, we fear, an earthly and

Already, by his own reflections, whether he form a moderate or an extravagant estimate of his moral worth, man is necessarily driven to acknowledge that he cannot pretend to much glory before God. That God, whose piercing eyes try the hearts and the reins, can see there a thousand imperfections, which we do not see; and since nothing can corrupt his judgment, nothing can induce us to hope that he will fall into the slightest mistake respecting us. Moreover, he is a God, perfectly holy, "whose eyes," saith the Scriptures, "are too pure to look upon iniquity." When he sees evil in the heart, he does not receive from it those feeble impressions which we do. He has a horror of everything which violates order; and this horror does not, like ours, attach itself exclusively to those actions which are more repugnant to our feelings than others, or which more sensibly disturb social relations. Far above such distinctions by the majesty of his nature, his divine impartiality attaches itself to the principle of actions; it is by their principle he judges them; and from this point of view, he does not always mark, with a stronger reprobation, the enormities which appal us, than the defects

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sensual heart; a fact of which he was not altogether unconscious. The following, from Eckerman's Conversations, p. 309, is an indirect, but striking testimony to this fact. "It is from olden time," said Goethe. "said and repeated, that man should strive to know himself. To this singular requisition no man either has fully answered, or shall answer. * * * * Man is a darkened being; he knows not whence he comes nor whither he goes; he knows little of the world, and less of himself. I know not myself, and may God protect me from it."—T.

to which our blame scarcely reaches. His justice, all divine, by disarranging our classifications, raises all to the same level, and gives the name of crime to customs which do not cost us the slightest scruple. Not only our vices, but our imperfections, our pretended indifferent actions, frequently our very virtues, rush at his bidding, to swell the ranks, where already crowd so many obvious crimes. Judged by this holy and formidable Judge, even the good man is transformed into a criminal, and models of righteousness appear as models of iniquity. If it is thus that God judges us, and how can we believe that he judges otherwise, there is doubtless left us very little occasion of glory before God. But is it not possible for you to judge of this by yourselves, by placing your minds, as far as may be, in the point of view occupied by your Creator? You can certainly do this, by considering the perfect law, where, as in a mirror, the divine perfection itself is reflected. The perfect law, or the law of perfection, has, in its application, no other limits than those of possibility. You need not consider it as a whole; take only one of its articles, that which commands us to do towards our neighbor, whatever we should desire him to do towards us. I am not afraid that you will refuse this precept; no one refuses it. Those who do not wish to hear us speak of Christian doctrine, willingly receive Christian morality; they pride themselves on feeling its beauty; they exalt it above all others. Singular prepossession For the morality ought to be much more offensive to them than the doctrine; the doctrine is consoling, the morality discouraging. But however that may be, judge yourselves by this one article; for if this article be true, if it ought to be maintained in all its force, if it does not behoove you to mutilate or weaken it, acknowledge that it condemns you. To treat your neighbor as you would that he should treat you! Such is the precept,—but pray, when have you observed it; or rather what day, what hour, have you not violated it? This precept, you know, is not negative; it embraces all the offices, all the cares, all the devotion and ardor of charity. It supposes that he who would observe it, shall not live for himself; that the welfare of his brethren shall become the principal motive of his life; that he shall include the whole world in his embrace, by the power of a generous love. Well, this positive aspect of the precept I will give up to you; and suppose, against all philosophical truth, that the negative part is independent of the other, and that charity may be confined to abstinence and omission. Thus, if any one abstain from doing to another the evil which he does not wish to receive from him, he is, by that alone, to be regarded as charitable. Well, have you, even in this limited sense, fulfilled the law? Do you fulfil it, when you use your *right* with rigor, and when no obligation compels you to use it thus? Do you fulfil it, when you give your neighbor examples which it would be injurious to you to receive? Do you fulfil it, when, without necessity, you wound his self-love, you whose self-love is so sensitive? Do you fulfil it, when you refuse him those attentions, which you are yourself so eager to receive? Do you fulfil it, when you judge his actions with an unfeeling severity, which you would not pardon in him, if he were to exercise it towards you? Of two duties, one, at least, is imposed upon you; either you must abstain from these things, or renounce whatever, up to this moment, you have required from another;

you must either give what you have required from him, or not require from him what you are unwilling to give him. Have you fulfilled this law? Have you not violated it every moment? Pass in review, in the same way, all the other articles of the law. Examine yourselves under the various relations it embraces. Hear its decision; for it is as if God himself spoke. Then estimate your deficiencies, and see the ground covered with your broken merits, your prostrate virtues. You went to meet God, in pompous apparel, and with a magnificent train; lo! you have arrived in his presence through the double hedge of the precepts of the law; look now, on each side of you, look behind you! What remains to you of that proud train? Are you not alone, and without support before God, and reduced humbly to beg mercy from him, whose justice you came proudly to claim?

I have said mercy, for without going further, I can already say it. The law in fact demanded nothing less than its full observance; your conscience also demanded as much; for at each duty neglected, at each transgression committed, it failed not in a single instance, to utter the cry of alarm. Even if you had fulfilled all its requirements, you must yet have placed yourselves in the rank of unprofitable servants. If, then, you have not been raised to the rank even of unprofitable servants, what is your position? And, to go to the bottom of the matter, what do you think of those frequent, those perpetual transgressions of the law, except that you have not loved it? For, if perchance you have fulfilled some of its precepts, you did so, because it happened to be agreeable to your inclinations, while the law in itself, the law as law, was hateful to you; and hence, if you have occasionally fallen in with it, you have never obeyed it. You will, therefore, conclude with me that you are rebels; that some acts of obedience, apparent and accidental, cannot remove from you that terrible distinction; and that mercy, not justice, is your only resource.

At this point, it seems to us, that we have said enough, to reach the end of all Christian preaching, that is, to cast the sinner trembling at the foot of mercy. But we do not forget what is the precise subject of this meditation. We have shown thus far, or rather we have ascertained with you, that man has few occasions of boasting before God. We must go still further; we must prove, according to the declaration of the apostle, that "all occasion for boasting is excluded."

To glorify himself before God! And for what? For having, whether in virtue or in vice, incessantly disobeyed him? For this is the crime which equalizes, among all men, all moral conditions. Other iniquities are individual; this is the great iniquity of the human race. Virtuous or vicious, we have all excluded God from our thoughts, from our motives of action, from our life. We have all equally violated the first, the greatest of all obligations. We are all, in the same degree, transgressors of eternal order.

Let a man, (I will, for a moment, suppose what is impossible,) let a man present himself to us. who can say, I have observed all the commandments of the law from my youth, only I have cared nothing for God. I have fulfilled my duties, only I have neglected the one which is most essential. I have been virtuous in every point, only I have committed the greatest of crimes. With how much propriety shall we say to him, You have not been virtuous at all; that is impossible. From the same source cannot spring sweet water and bitter. The same soul cannot contain elements so contradictory. The mind refuses to conceive an alliance so monstrous. And if you persist in calling *virtue*, acts which we admit enjoy the esteem of men, you compel us to affirm that such acts cannot constitute true virtue. Detached from the true principle of all good, they wither, as necessarily as a flower separated from its roots, and "the jealous God" can never honor a proud virtue which has never honored him.

And let no one say that this is a dispute about words; that obedience only is essential; and that he who obeys the law and his conscience obeys God. If the one is identical with the other, if the one costs no more effort than the other, whence comes that universal repugnance to pass from the one to the other, from the law to the lawgiver, from the conscience to God? Whence comes that inconceivable preference of the thing to the person, of the idea to its source, of the abstraction to the living being? Why will not man obey the voice of God, except indirectly? Why obstinately refuse an immediate contact with his heavenly Father? If he respects the law as coming from God, if he honors conscience as the voice of God, whence comes it that God himself is not the direct end and object of his homage? The truth is, it is not God he honors in the law and in conscience, but himself. He appropriates these two elements, and these two authorities, to his own use, transforms them into his own being, and by adoring them as a part of himself, in reality adores himself.

What imports it, you say, that I neglect the lawgiver, provided I observe the law? This idea would be admissible, to some extent, in our relations with the lawgivers of this world. They are but men, your equals, mere representatives of the society of which you form a part, simple organs of the ideas of justice and order, which a higher power has deposited in society. They possess no dignity, the source of which is in themselves. It is not thus with God; he represents no one. He is not the organ of law; he is the living law. The law itself is not law, except as it comes from him. He is himself the supreme and final reason of all that he does, the supreme and final reason of all ideas. While it is the law which we honor in the person of the legislator, here it is the legislator that we must honor in the law. To observe the law without respect to the lawgiver, is actually to violate the law; for our first duty relates to the lawgiver. To respect the ideas, and neglect him who is their author and source, who is the cause of their truth, and of whom those ideas are only the shadow or the reflection, is the most appalling of contradictions. To admit conscience and duty, justice and injustice, as realities, and to make an abstraction of the BEING who alone is the sanction of these ideas, who alone gives them a basis, who alone binds the chain of them to a fixed point, who alone, we may say, explains their presence in the human mind, and renders them conceivable, is a profound absurdity. Finally, let us try to extend and elevate our conception a little. Let us transport it, as much as our feebleness will admit, to the idea of the God of Moses; of him who named himself I AM THAT I AM; of the necessary Being, the universal Being, say rather, THE BEING; of that God who is not an idea, a form, an abstraction, but BEING; of that living, infinite personality, who is essentially one, of that eternal Me, of whom the *me* of each of us is only a mysterious emanation; of that Being who is the source of all things, and constitutes our power, our breath, our life, nay, all in us which is positive and true.*

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* This is a sublime definition of God, but to say that the *me* of each of us, in other words, that which constitutes our personality, is an emanation of God, is liable to be misunderstood. If by this expression it is meant that the soul of man was created by God, without any reference to the mode of that creation, then it is true. But if it is meant to convey the idea that the soul is a part of God, a portion of his essence or substance, which has proceeded, or flowed out, so to speak, from his infinite *pleroma*, or fulness, then it may be denied, as unphilosophical and unscriptural. God is a unity, an infinite, undivided and unchangeable essence. He cannot be increased or diminished. Nothing can be given to him, or taken from him. He cannot, therefore, give off portions of himself; nor can these flow from him of their own accord, as rays from the sun, or streams from the fountain. That he has all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, that he can perform all possible things, and bestow all possible blessings, is cheerfully granted. But he cannot (with reverence be it spoken) impart any portion of his own infinite essence, he cannot divide or diminish, multiply or increase, what properly constitutes himself, his personality, or, as the French and Germans call it, the infinite and eternal Me. No creature, then, however highly endowed, is, properly speaking, God, or a part of God. He may be made in the image of God, that is to say, he may be created a spiritual, intelligent, and moral agent; but he cannot partake of his essence or personality, which is equally incapable of division or multiplication.

God has the power of creation; an original and peculiar, as well as mysterious and amazing power. He speaks, and it is done; he commands, and it stands fast. But to say that he creates by giving out portions of himself, or parting with his own essence, now forming souls of it, and now bodies, is assuming what can never be proved, and what seems to contradict our most necessary conceptions of the nature of God. For if God creates thus, then all spirits, and not only so, but all matter is God. Everything is God, and God is everything. This is the idea of Pantheism. It is the very basis of the doctrine of an impersonal God, from which the atheism and impiety of "young Germany" are legitimately born. For if the premises be just, the conclusion is logical

After this, is there one of us who will dare to say that it is the law which concerns us, and not the Lawgiver?

You place your Creator on the same level with a human legislator, and because the latter demands nothing more than obedience, you claim that God will not demand more. But in the divine Legislator, do you

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and irresistible. But the doctrine of Pantheism, whether it appear in the gorgeous dreams of oriental theosophy, the subtleties of Spinoza and Hegel, or the blasphemous ravings of Gutzkow and Heine, is neither, in its premises or conclusions, the doctrine of the Bible nor of common sense. For while God is "in all, and through all," he is above all and independent of all. The soul of man is a creation, so is his body, so are all souls and all bodies. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." "He said, Let there be light, and there was light." He said, "Let us make man in our image," and man was made in his image. But while the soul exhibited the image of God, it was neither God nor a part of God, but a separate being, a free and responsible agent, under law to the Almighty. "Our God made the heavens." "From him cometh every good and perfect gift." The God of the Bible, then, the God of Christianity, is a personal God, an infinite but independent Intelligence, a holy and ever-blessed Sovereign, to whom we owe the homage of the heart, the obedience of the life.

This is a subject of great importance, and cannot be discussed in a note; but we could not justify ourselves in passing it over in silence. Our author's views are, doubtless, scriptural and philosophical, but the expression in the text required this explanation. His definition of God is remarkably striking, and reminds us of Sir Isaac Newton's, which is the best we have ever seen. We subjoin it with a translation. The original may be found in Dugald Stewart's Dissertations, Part II, p. 105, Note.

"Deus eternus est et infinitus, omnipotens et omnisciens: id est, durat ab æterno in æternum, et adest ab infinito in infinitum. Non est æternitas et infinitas, sed æternus et infinitus; non est duratio et spatium sed durat et adest. Durat semper et adest ubique, et existendo semper et ubique, durationem et spatium constituit."—"God is eternal and infinite, omnipotent and omniscient; that is, he endures from eternity to eternity, and is present from infinity to infinity. He is not eternity and infinity, but eternal and infinite; he is not duration and space, but enrecognize nothing more than a legislator? Is there nothing but the law between you and God? Is it the law which has conferred upon you so many means of enjoyment and happiness? Is it the law which has conceded to you the empire of nature? Is it the law which has formed between you and your kindred the mysterious and delightful union of hearts? No; in these immense benefits, one of which would suffice for the happiness of beings less privileged, the Lawgiver conceals himself, and the Father appears, a father whose goodness transcends all thought. And you think that a cold and servile obedience can acquit you before him? You think that the power to love which he has planted in your bosom ought never to remount to him! That all your obedience should not be love! That your heart should not seek beyond the law and beyond the Lawgiver, the Father, the Goodness, the love, from whom proceed for you, life, and even love and felicity! And you say coldly, unnatural creatures! We obey,—it is enough; are we not acquitted? And of that law which you pretend to fulfil, do you not understand that you have violated the first and the greatest commandment, by refusing to God love for love! No,—tell me not that in the law you honor the Lawgiver; unless, perhaps, he should be honored by fear! Tell me not

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dures and is present. He endures always and is present everywhere, and by existing always and everywhere, constitutes duration and space."

What a comment on the I AM THAT I AM, of Moses!

"Tell them I AM! Jehovah said
To Moses, while earth heard in dread,
And smitten to the heart,
At once above, beneath, around,
All nature, without voice or sound,
Replied O LORD, THOU ART!"

that your homage secures your felicity, unless, perhaps, a feeling, which, in all its power, could not draw a demon from hell, may suffice by itself to introduce you into heaven! The law, practised in such a spirit, kills, does not save you.

You honor conscience! Indeed, I believe it. It would be difficult not to honor it, to a certain extent. It would not pardon neglect. Invisible sting, planted by the side of the soul, the least irregular motion impels the soul against that hidden point, and inflicts a painful wound. But if conscience, after God had been exiled from the human heart, still remained there, it would be incessantly to warn it of God. But who receives that warning? You recognize the authority of conscience; you say that you have frequently heard it; but you ascend no higher. Thing truly inconceivable! Separated from the idea of God, conscience, in our nature, is nothing but a mockery, an enigma, a nonentity. Well, it is on this very footing that the greater part of mankind admit it. Indeed, you see some, to whom the idea of the judgments of God and a final responsibility is completely foreign, who at least reject it, and who, nevertheless, speak fluently of conscience as their internal guide; forgetting that if conscience has no one from whom it derives authority and to whom it can appeal, if it does not deduce its power from God, it has nothing to say, nothing to command. Why is it heard? Why is it acknowledged? Because this is not a matter of choice. Conscience is in us; nor does it depend on us that it should not be there; absent, we cannot recall it; present, we cannot deny its presence. But its presence, often otherwise unpleasant, and viewed with an evil eye, is not the presence of God. Conscience is only the permanent and indelible imprint of a powerful hand, which after having pressed us, is withdrawn from us, or rather from which a hostile force has torn us. The hand is gone, the imprint remains. That mysterious impression, which we have not made upon ourselves, leads the man who reflects, to a confused idea of God. It causes him to infer, and to seek after the absent hand; but, by itself, it cannot enable him to find it.

Would you have a sensible idea of conscience in man? An ungrateful child, impelled by infatuated pride, and seduced by evil counsels, escapes from the paternal roof to taste an independence which has been represented to him as the greatest of blessings. He plunges into the world, without means or prospect. His disorders and excesses, though they may not provoke the severity of civil justice, mark him, in all places, under his distinctive traits, as a rebellious and unnatural son. But in the midst of his wanderings, something indicates that he is derived from a good family; in his language, a happy choice of expression; in his manners, something superior; in his behavior, even honorable actions, which form a striking contrast with the general character of his life; in a word, a lingering something which it is difficult to efface from the original habits of a man well brought up, accompanies him into all the places and all the societies where such merit is least appreciated. It seems as if we might expect every species of evil from a being who has voluntarily broken the heart of a father; and yet, quite often, when the seduction of example impels him to overleap the last barriers of honor, he hesitates, he draws back; self-respect appears to hold him still.

Clinging to him, in spite of himself, the recollections of his first condition follow him, surround him, and intercept, on the way to his heart, a part at least of the pestilential malaria which the world exhales, and prevents him from running from excess to excess, and from fall to fall, through all the possible consequences of his first crime.

Faithful image of man in his state of defection, conscience yet speaks to him. Sometimes he follows it; but as for Him in whose name it speaks, who has planted it in the bosom of man as a perpetual monitor, as a cry of recall incessantly repeated,—he hears him not, he serves him not, nay more, he abjures him; and yet he cannot be still, because, after all, he has, now and then, yielded something to the clamorous importunities of conscience! Ah! if he had always heard it, always followed it, the difference would not have been great, for it is not thus that God teaches *his* rights and *our* duty. Whatever may be the dignity of conscience, a dignity it borrows from God, God will not be supplanted by it. Far from yielding to it any of his rights, far indeed from abdicating his authority in its favor, as some appear to suppose, God, who will not permit prescription to be established in opposition to his claims, has sometimes commanded conscience itself to be silent before him. It is on the idea of his immediate right to obedience that many of the dispensations and decrees of the ancient economy rest. Indeed, if you look at that history as a whole, you see that while God, in general, respects his own work, by recognizing and even sanctioning the moral law, which he has written, from the beginning, in the human heart, you perceive also, that, as he occasionally intervenes by his power, in the working of miracles, without changing in any respect the combination of forces of which he has composed the universe, so likewise, in the sphere of morals, he imposes a momentary silence on the sensibilities of our nature, and even on our conscience, by commanding what these would not even have permitted. While Abraham is commended for having led his son to the funeral pile, in spite of the murmurs of the paternal heart, and Saul is punished for having obeyed an emotion of pity, and not committing what, on another occasion, would have been called an abuse of victory, do we not recognize in these two terrible facts a striking symbol of the truth which I advocate, namely, that God is above conscience, that it is to him our obedience ought to be addressed, and that his divine jealousy cannot be satisfied at a less price ?*

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* The procedure of God is ever in harmony with conscience and law. So far as these are perfect they are but an expression of the divine character and will. He may seem to suspend their action, as in the case of Abraham and of Saul, but the result shows that, all the time, he was acting in harmony with their fundamental principles. But as the law resolves itself into the will of God, and he has the sovereign disposal of life and death, he has a right to take the life of his creatures, or command it to be taken whenever he pleases. Still, he will always act in harmony with law, that is to say, with his own nature. "He cannot deny himself." "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" But he must be judged by his own standard; he must be permitted to interpret his own doings. He has, therefore, only appeared, in special exigences and for purposes at once good and wise, to suspend the action of natural and moral laws; but he has never annulled them, never violated them. All has been order in nature; all has been righteousness in morals. If at any time, his hand has parted the clouds, or laid itself upon the conscience of man, it has been done to show that he is infinite and supreme; that he is above all law and conscience; or rather that he is one with a perfect law and a perfect conscience, and can use them, as he pleases, to promote the sublime purposes of his providence

Let us confirm these principles by an important consideration. It is, that obedience to God, I mean to God immediately, is alone capable of producing *virtue*. If recalling all that we have conceded, in a preceding discourse, some should find in this assertion a contradiction, as well as a paradox, they will give some attention to what remains for us to say.

Is virtue a word, or a thing, a fiction, or a reality? If it is a thing, a distinct reality, it must be *one* in its principle, *one* in its origin. If it has several principles, it is several things at once; it is an artificial assemblage of several phenomena, on which has been imposed a collective name, and the real nature of which remains by itself inexplicable. It must necessarily be admitted, that beyond filial piety, justice, benevolence, veracity, chastity, there is one thing which is none of these in particular, and which embraces them all at once; a principle, according to which we are not only respectful sons, or just, benevolent, sincere, and chaste men; but all this at once, *all that we ought to be;* a general power which must conform our soul to moral order in all its extent, and cause us to love it in all its applications; which, in a word, creates in us, not *virtues* but *virtue*. Does this word virtue, in its general or abstract sense, signify anything? Is it a central fountain, of which particular virtues are the streams, a trunk, of which particular virtues are the branches? If you deny this, you are on the way to materialism; for it alone can solve your theory. If, on the contrary, you affirm it, point out to us this trunk, this source. The

and grace. Hence, to pretend to follow the dictates of conscience, or obey the law, independent of the will and authority of the Lawgiver, is truly "a profound absurdity."—T.

discovery of this original principle has been for a long time the task and the despair of moral philosophy. Will you seek for it in the conscience? From the conscience, in its actual state, you may derive some particular virtues, but their course, followed back, will not enable you to reach the primitive stratum, the original treasury, whence these waters flow. What is there, in the conscience of man, more general than that which we have already cited, "As ye would that others should do to you, do ye even so to them?" But how far is this from embracing the whole extent of moral being! How should such an axiom contain the obligation to purify the heart? How could you conclude from it the duty of rendering to God the homage which is his due? Vast as it is, it does not embrace the half of our duties. And in practice, what deficiencies, what inconsistencies, would it not permit to remain! What, then, is human morality, but a disconnected and fragmentary thing, even in the man who is most distinguished for his character! In vain do you search there for the common principle of all morality. In a word, he derives from his conscience only some *virtues;* he cannot derive from it *virtue.*

Hence it is, that virtue ought not to be sought after, anywhere below God, who is its supreme and only source. In fact, the love of God is virtue. The power which produces in man simultaneously, as from a single fountain, all the virtues, dwells only in this sentiment. Thus it is, that in the production of this affection in the human bosom, the Scriptures make regeneration to consist. It does not teach us to be virtuous by successive additions, by placing one virtue, so to speak, side by side with another. It unites us to God by faith; and this faith which produces love, develops simultaneously in the renewed soul all those qualities and habits, the combination of which forms *virtue*. And it is because he plants that one germ in the very centre of the soul, and not at different points on its surface, that he attaches a sovereign importance to internal dispositions. The Bible alone has said, with a perfect knowledge of its cause, "From the heart proceed the springs of life." Social virtues, followed as an end, by the ordinary moralist, are in the eyes of the Christian moralist only the development of internal virtue, the sign and manifestation of its presence in the soul. Human morality, in its most perfect state, is only an ingenious mosaic, the least concussion of which, makes it a heap of variegated rubbish; Christian morality is the mighty pyramid, every part of which finds the same support in its immense base, immovable as the ground upon which it stands.*

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* The materialists derive the idea of virtue from order, fitness, harmony, utility; and since the maxim of their philosophy is, *nihil est in intellectu, quod non fuit prius in sensu*, there is nothing in the intellect, which was not first in the senses; virtue, according to them, is a thing altogether outward and artificial, a matter of mere expediency, or of taste. The Spiritualists, on the other hand, maintain that it is innate and universal. Some of them would perhaps say, that it is reason in its highest estate, or that it is God in the soul. This latter view, though an approach to the truth, is yet vague and unsatisfactory. Indeed, every one acquainted with the history of metaphysical inquiries, knows that no subject has more completely bewildered and baffled the profoundest thinkers. But even if the nature of virtue were perfectly understood, the great question would yet remain, How is it to be produced in the human heart? Our author says that the love of God is its basis, or source; and he is unquestionably right. For this affection, the strongest and purest in man, placed on an infinite object, is alone fitted to control the whole life. It then becomes universal, resistless, and inexhaustible. From its very nature, it renders virtue precious for its own sake, and

With whatever pretensions man may approach his divine Judge, he cannot present himself with *virtue;* he has it not, for he has not the love of God. What glory, then, could he find before God? Acknowledge that all occasion of glorifying himself is excluded; excluded for the man whom the world despises; excluded for him whom it esteems. "There is no difference," says the apostle, "for all have sinned." Up to this point, the possibility of a difference may be conceived; but he adds, "and are deprived of all glory before God." Here differences disappear; for this sin, which is *sin* properly speaking, is the same in all. In this point of view, the most generous man has a hard heart, the most just is unrighteous, the most honorable unfaithful, the most loyal rebellious, the most pure adulterous; for everything he has spared his fellow-men, he has done to God.*

Do not suppose we are ignorant of all the murmurs, which feeling our natural prejudice may raise against this declaration. We might confine ourselves to replying that it remains true notwithstanding, and with an

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dearer than all other interests. By enthroning God in the soul, it makes truth and holiness omnipotent and immortal.—T.

* This, an objector might say, is to confound all moral distinctions. But if the author's premises are true, his conclusions are inevitable. If man is destitute of love to God, the fundamental principle of virtue, he is destitute of all true morality. His heart is corrupt, and his outward and temporary virtues are radically defective. They may be useful in society, but they do not unite him to God, nor fit him for immortality. He is condemned by the state of his heart, with which the government of God is chiefly occupied, and must therefore be ranked with the ungrateful and disobedient. He needs, as well as they, to be forgiven and renewed. If saved at all, he must be saved by grace, as much as the Thief on the cross, Mary Magdalene, or Saul of Tarsus. "God hath concluded them all in unbelief (rebellion) that he might have mercy upon all."—T.

evidence stronger than all prejudices. But the consideration of an interesting fact will double, if it be necessary, the evidence already so great.

It would be natural to presume, that the more virtuous a man was, the less disposed we should find him to subscribe to the doctrine of our text, or at least to permit himself to be placed, in this respect, on the same level with a man decidedly vicious. I do not deny, that we might easily find, among honorable people, some specimens of this natural pharisaism. But what we often meet with among the noblest souls, and much more frequently among them than others, is a disposition to complain of themselves, and voluntarily to place themselves below those persons who, in the general opinion, are greatly their inferiors. May it not be that these noble spirits, to whom their very superiority may be the commencement of a revelation, perceive dimly, that in the midst of their amiable virtues, virtue itself is wanting? We go further: let these souls come in contact with Christianity. To whom, according to common notions, is it less necessary than to them? Have they not already, by virtue of their character, the greater part of what it can give them? Alas! many imagine it to be really so! But many more, and that is sufficient for our purpose, judge very differently. In the midst of their virtues, so highly lauded, a want, not of perfection only, but of forgiveness, and of grace, takes powerful possession of their minds; they confess frankly that they have no subject of glory before God. Speak to them of their virtues, they ask if these virtues prevent their life from being a continued course of transgressions of the divine law. Speak to them of the intrinsic worth of their virtues, and you will see them smile mournfully; for they know the defectiveness of these virtues, entirely human, and so far removed from every principle of religious obedience. It is not an easy thing to refuse the testimony of such men; it would be contrary to all good usage, to place more confidence in those who boast, than in those who accuse themselves. It would be to suspect the truth in a case where there is the least reason to suspect it, and to deny the wisdom of those to whom you have not been able hitherto to refuse it. It would be to admit that it is impossible that a careful examination of himself and of the divine law may conduct a man of sense to moral views different from those of persons who have not made such an examination; in a word, it would furnish evidence of a superficialness which would not be pardoned in any other matter. I am persuaded, that a phenomenon like the one in question, at the very least, is worthy of the most serious attention, and that no one ought to set it aside, before he has explained it.

For ourselves, if our opinion were asked, we avow that the madness of human pride amazes us. Man bends under the burden of his iniquities; horrors crowd his bloody history; an odor of death exhales from the bosom of society; the life of each man is, from his own confession, a tissue of transgressions, and, considered with reference to the claims of God, a long and persevering infidelity. Terrible assertions, none of which he can disavow. The Son of God comes to seek him in the depths of this appalling degradation. So long as that dishonored creature can hear him, he calls to him, with the word of grace; he exhorts him to attach himself to him, and promises that, under his guidance, he shall be able to stand without fear in the presence of his Judge. One moment!—cries the proud criminal,—one moment! Who hath said that I have need of grace; and on what ground does he come to offer me that humiliating benefit? And my virtues, have they been estimated? Is it pretended that they need grace? Must I drag, as suppliants, these noble companions of my life, to the foot of a tribunal where crime alone ought to appear? If my sins have need of indulgence, my virtues claim nothing but justice; and yet it is pretended to absolve them! Yes, it is pretended to absolve them, unhappy one, whom pride deceives! But what difference will it make? With them, or without them, you are condemned; midnight is about to strike; the bridegroom is at the door! Is your lamp burning? Is your soul united to God? Are you his by the dispositions of your heart? Can you be happy in the society of saints, of Christ, and of God himself? This, this is the real question, the vital question; and in this solemn hour, when your terrestrial dwelling is about to fall upon your head, when a single moment only is given you to escape, you lose it, by picking up some useless ruins, with which you cannot live, and by which, on the contrary, you will perish.

Sinners virtuous, sinners vicious! hear once more the word of the apostle, "There is no difference, for all have sinned; both the one and the other are deprived of all glory before God."

But to sinners of every kind, to us all, to the whole world, the man of God cries in the Scriptures, "God hath concluded all in rebellion, that he may have mercy upon all." With him there is no respect of persons, no respect of sins; he stops not at some shades of difference; he does not apply to us our own vain measures;

for the original crime is equal in all; and since he has included all in rebellion, he includes all in mercy. Laborers of the first, of the second, of the eleventh hour! nay more, ye who were not laborers at all, and who, having arrived at the fatal hour of midnight, have nothing to offer your Master but confusion and tears, there is room for you all in his arms. But you must throw yourselves there; you must seek no other aid; you must not expose yourselves to the malediction of the prophet, "Cursed be they who go down to Egypt for help!" That is, cursed be they who, refusing to be saved by pure grace, take refuge in the recollection of their good works, their good will, their good intentions, or in a false pretext, a feebleness which they could not vanquish, or in the impious idea that God will pardon them at the expense of his justice! The amnesty is doubtless for all, for all equally; but it must be accepted just as it is offered; not as a right, but as a gift; not as an abandonment of the principles of the divine government, but as the price of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, as a return for the ransom he has paid and the pledge he has offered. Such are the feelings with which we must come before that offended Master, who alone has a right to regulate and appoint the terms of the treaty which he will conclude with us. It would be to sanction and confirm the first rebellion by a second, to dispute about the terms of the treaty, to propose modifications of it, to cavil about the clauses, say rather, not to accept it, with all the eagerness of gratitude, and all the fervor of love. Weigh all these things, my dear brethren, and let those who feel internally that they are not reconciled to God, ask themselves without delay: "Why do we hesitate to conclude with divine justice? Shall we persist, without a shadow of hope, in making common cause with rebels? Do we wish that death should surprise us included in revolt? Let the world insult our feebleness; there is no cowardice in capitulating with God. He is mad who would sell, to a vain renown for courage, the hopes of eternity! Unhappy he who can spend a whole life without loving and serving God! We are here, then, O Lord; take us to thyself, take us wholly: we would not live to ourselves, we would live only to Him who hath loved us first, loved us with an eternal love!

THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN MORALITY.

"The love of Christ constraineth us."—2 Cor. v. 14.

A short time since, one of those fugitive publications which are intended to offer daily aliment to the public curiosity, called the attention of its readers to a new work, which ought, if we might believe the critic, to alarm all the friends of pure morality. That dangerous work develops an idea which shows how the doctrine, and perhaps the intention of the author, is corrupted, namely, that all the efforts of man cannot secure his salvation, and that he can do nothing to merit it. You will ask me what that book so severely criticized is. I know not, for it is not even named; but it might be the New Testament. For the New Testament also declares that man is not saved by his works; that the gift of salvation is entirely gratuitous; and that it is neither of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but God that showeth mercy. And since the gospel neither supposes nor admits of any other means of salvation, it clearly follows that no other means which we may attempt would conduct us to that result, not even the greatest efforts we could make to fulfil the will of God. Such is the doctrine in all its nakedness, I was going to say, in all its crudeness. What, then, must we do? As to the men who call themselves Christians, and yet censure these doctrines, it would, perhaps, be sufficient to reduce them to silence, by showing them that the doctrines they revile are the very doctrines of the gospel, and that the church, for about eighteen centuries, has professed and proclaimed them as fundamental truths. But as these inconsiderate critics exhibit, besides a great ignorance of the contents of the New Testament, a striking want of reflection and of true philosophy, it may be proper to examine the maxim in question, as a simple idea, as a pure theory, in the light of reason alone. This is what we propose to undertake; and we hope that the result of this investigation will show that this doctrine is not only reasonable and moral, but that it alone is reasonable, that it alone is truly moral.

And first of all, let us give a full statement of the difficulty which is presented to us. "A doctrine," it is said, "which teaches that we cannot merit salvation, which denies the sufficiency, and, consequently, the necessity of good works, is directly contradictory to the idea of morality; for morality is the science of duty, and in the doctrine objected to, there is no place for duty. Moreover, this doctrine contradicts the New Testament; for on all its pages it enjoins good works, while this doctrine excludes them." Let us meet this objection. And to those who urge it upon us, let us, in our turn, put some questions.

If there is a religious morality that is a system of duties with reference to our Creator, must we not possess some motive to induce us to practise such duties? It is admitted. Can there be any other motive than the two following, interest and devotion?* No, it is not possible to conceive of a third. Well, then, to these two motives correspond two systems, which we proceed to examine.

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* By devotion, *devouement*, the author means the disinterested love of virtue, benevolence, as some have called it.—T.

According to the first of these systems, every man comes into the world with perfect faculties, with obligations corresponding to these, and the expectation of a destiny suited to the manner in which he shall have used these faculties and fulfilled these obligations. Between God and him there exists a tacit contract, a reciprocal obligation. Man promises obedience, and God promises happiness. He that does good shall be recompensed; he that does evil shall be punished. This is sufficient to make us perform all our duties.

In this first system, then, interest is the motive proposed to us; an interest, doubtless, very elevated, nay, the greatest of all, but still an interest. But who does not, at the first glance, see how insufficient and defective is such motive? In the first place, this principle introduces into morality a foreign element, we may say a hostile element, since virtue consists essentially in self-sacrifice. This principle does not at first manifest all its hostility to the true spirit of morality. But let it work, and you will speedily see it subduing everything to itself. It will soon teach you that it is the result which gives to actions all their value; that it is the net profit or loss which determines their essential character; that good is no longer good in itself; that it is good only as it secures happiness, and that vice is no longer vice in itself, but that it is vice only as it exposes to calamity. Promises have only to be attached to vice, and it will become virtue, threatenings to virtue, and it will become vice. Nevertheless, if morality is not a vain word, virtue, separated from its hopes, must still be something; and vice, separated from its dangers, must also be something. This is not all; for we must not forget that we are treating of religious morality; of duties which have God for their object; and that the first of all these duties, the only duty, properly speaking, is love. The law is not fulfilled except by love. But interest, carried to its utmost perfection, selfishness the most refined, can never rise to love. Under its influence a man may estimate the value of actions; he may make calculations with reference to the external life; nay more, he may give all his goods to feed the poor, and his body to be burned; but he can no more cause himself, by self-interest, to love, than he can from the collision of two pieces of ice produce the slightest spark of fire.

Disgusted with this wholly selfish morality, other minds have dreamed of a different system. They have absolutely excluded interest, and professed to cultivate virtue for its own sake. "Is not virtue," say they, "independent of the advantages it procures, worthy to receive our homage, and occupy our thoughts? Is it necessary for God, who is truth, beauty, goodness supreme, to encourage us by promises, to frighten us by threatenings, in order to secure our obedience? In serving him, we ought to blush to yield to other impulses, than those which result from his perfections themselves?

Well, who of us will venture to say that these are not right? Who will not heartily subscribe to this elevated system? But, on the other hand, who will realize it? This system is beautiful, it is lofty, it is true. It has only one defect,—it is impracticable. A truce to reasonings; let us speak only of facts. Where are those who serve God from pure love? Nay, where are those who love God at all? Let us not seek to deceive ourselves. Those fugitive emotions, which the thought of the Creator, or the contemplation of his marvellous works, causes us to feel, those superficial impressions, otherwise foreign to so many hearts, are by no means love. If we love God only when we find our happiness in subordinating to him our thoughts, affections, wishes, nay more, our whole life; if we love God only when we lose our will in his; if we love God only when offending him appears to us the greatest, the only calamity on earth, and pleasing him the greatest, the only felicity; if we love God only when our heart places between Him and creatures the same distance he places himself,—answer, ye who hear me, who is it that loves God? True, the worldling quite often exclaims, I certainly love God; nay, who does not love him? But nothing marks with greater clearness, the estrangement of our heart, than the audacity of this pretension. He who begins to love God, is the first to be alarmed at his indifference to God. We love God!—ah! let us not rashly say so. When we shall cherish for him the tenth, the hundredth part, of the affection which we cherish for a parent, a friend, or an earthly benefactor, it will be time, perhaps, to say that we love him. Till then let us be silent, and prostrate in the dust.

But if we do not love him, what becomes of that disinterested morality which we were right to prefer? What becomes of that refined system of which we were so proud?

It is true, that in the world, there are men who have set out to serve God. They have acknowledged that he had a right to be served; they have felt internally, the obligation to devote to him their life. But in what has that attempt terminated, except in proving that they did not really love God? The worldling, the frivolous man, might tell you, with confidence, that he loves God; but go and ask troubled and burdened spirits, who laboriously and painfully drag the long chain of the precepts of the law, go and ask them if they have that love in their hearts. Ah! it is not love of which they will speak, but of fear, that is to say, of *interest* still. They will tell you of the majesty of the divine law, of its inviolability, of its threatenings. They will tell you that their sins are a burden greater than they can bear. They will tell you that instead of the Father they were seeking, they have found only a master and a judge; that his wrath has concealed from them his goodness; that fear has left no place for love, and that before loving they must hope.

Mark it well; before they love, they must hope. And this is the method of the gospel. It remains for us to develop it.

You have seen that interest is not worthy to serve as a motive power to our moral conduct. You have seen, on the other hand, that an obedience based only upon love, has no place in the heart of the natural man. Here, then, we experience a double embarrassment; we must discard interest, and produce love; but how discard interest, how produce love? The gospel engages to answer these two questions.

Do this and live, the majority of moralists say to us; so also do the Scriptures of the Old Testament. That is to say, if we regard the spirituality, the perfection of the law, do what is impossible, and live; do what is impossible, or perish.

It was necessary that such a morality should be taught in the world; it was necessary, also, that God should proclaim it in the old dispensation; it is still necessary that it should be preached in our days, among those who resist the gospel; because the blessing must be estimated by the want, the remedy by the evil. Those who reject Jesus Christ must learn how far they are from fulfilling the conditions of their existence, and how much they need that the exigency thus created should be met by Him who can meet all exigencies, supply all deficiencies, in a word, by Him who only can create; for the thing to be accomplished is nothing less than a creation. In this way law, or morality, "is a schoolmaster that leads to Christ."*

But in the case of him whom the conviction of his guilt and impotence has led to Christ, a new order of things commences, a new morality springs up. The law has said,—"do these things, and live," but the language of the gospel is,—"live, and do these things." In the ordinary morality, obedience precedes and produces salvation; in that of the gospel, salvation precedes and produces obedience.

Do you perceive that this simple transposition harmonizes everything? We knew not what to do with interest, nor where to find love. Both of them find a place in this system, but in a new order, and in a new relation. Might I venture to say the gospel expels our selfishness by satiating it, exhausts it by giving it everything? It effaces *self* as its very first act. At the outset, and once for all, the greater part is given to interest, or rather the whole is given to it, everything that can fill the capacity of the heart of men and of angels; eternal life, salvation, in the highest and most perfect sense of the word. The gospel begins by declaring that we are saved, not by our works, but independently of them, nay, before our works. It relieves us of the intolerable burden, which caused us to bend under the obligations and terrors of the law. It gives rest and enlargement to the heart. It restores it to liberty. And of this liberty what use do we make? It is here the beauty of the evangelical system is seen. Joyful over his dissipated fears, happy on account of his deliverance, and tranquil with reference to his future fate, but, above all, admitted to contemplate God in the perfect manifestation of his love, confiding in God, whose goodness knows no change; in a word, conquered by gratitude, he is seized with a desire to do everything for Him who hath first loved him, and given himself for him. "He loveth much, because he is forgiven much." Will he neglect the law? On the contrary, it will become to him more dear and sacred. But he will observe it in another spirit,—as the law of love, as the law of a Father and a Saviour. He will acknowledge that it is perfect, that it is sweeter than honey, that it restores the soul. He will delight in it after the inward man. He will practise it, doubtless from a sense of obligation, but also from taste, from inclination, soon even from instinct; and he will observe it more and more, as it becomes dearer to his heart by the good fruits which it brings forth. It will no longer be necessary to say to him, In the name of your eternal interests, in the name of the terrors of the judgment, do this and live; because his eternal interests have been provided for, and the sentence which condemns him has been nailed to the cross. But it will be said to him, "Walk in good works, for which ye were created in Christ Jesus. Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your bodies, and in your spirits which are his;" or, as the apostle says in another place, "I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice unto God, holy and acceptable, which is your reasonable service."

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* The apostle Paul describes Christians as "new creatures," or, as the original reads, "a new creation in Christ Jesus." In another passage, he speaks of them as passing "from death unto life." So that the language of Vinet is fully justified by the word of God. Besides, does not reason itself corroborate this view? If man is not pure and virtuous, he is morally dead; in order then to live, he must be born again, that is to say, he must receive a new moral life. He needs two things, pardon and sanctification. The bestowment of these by the gospel is surely nothing less than "a new creation."—T.

Doubtless, this fulness of confidence, this victorious assurance, is not imparted, in the same degree, to all Christians; and if many possess it in the first moment of their conversion, others arrive at it only by a slow and laborious progress, while others, all their life long, rejoice with trembling. But observe two things particularly; in the first place, it is certain that in the view of all those to whom it has been given to believe in the merciful sacrifice of the Saviour, God is love. They know, they feel that they are loved; they see that the designs of God respecting them are salvation and peace; and this conviction which reveals to their mind another God than is known to the world, also inspires them with other dispositions than those of the world. They love that God who has loved them personally and tenderly; and thus it is that love becomes the principle of their moral life. Secondly, the gospel, by incessantly declaring that their works cannot save them, by impelling them continually towards the idea of a gratuitous salvation, forever urges them towards divine love, and forces all their thoughts to concentrate on that great object,—the compassion of the Saviour. With these persuasions, with this constant direction of the mind, it is impossible that the life should not become a life according to God. These Christians, then, do not form an exception to the position we have laid down. But this is not all.

Sincere faith is, in reality, full of hope. The individual who firmly believes that the blood of the new covenant has been shed for him, cannot be persuaded that He who has enabled him to believe, hath bestowed a gift illusory and vain. He cannot deny to himself the faithfulness of God. And if sometimes the ineffaceable conviction of his own unworthiness, the consideration of that law of the flesh in his members which fights against the law of the spirit, the view of so many deplorable infidelities in the bosom even of the church may, for a moment, obscure his hope, these very things make him recur with redoubled fervor to Him, who, finding nothing in us to make us acceptable in his sight, has been willing to save us through the faith which he has given. Do not imperatively demand from that Christian soul the triumphant assurance which the Lord has not made the privilege of all believers. He has it not, perhaps; but he loves; he has renounced all merit; he expects nothing from himself, but everything from his Father. I ask you, if he has not complied with the terms of the gospel? I ask you, when he obeys from love, without hope in himself, without mercenary and sordid views, if that principle of Christian morality, the superiority of which we have endeavored to establish, is a stranger to him, and if the occasional shadows which becloud his hope, in any measure detract from the system we have developed.

True, the gospel speaks of a recompense, a reward, a crown. Here is only one truth; but it may have two aspects. It is quite evident that faith produces love, that love produces obedience, and an obedience which makes no calculation. But it is equally true that the works of such an obedience are good works; that such works lead to happiness as a necessary consequence; that God has not desired, and cannot desire the restoration of man without the design of rendering him happy; and that, in this view, the gospel has been able, in God's name, to speak of a recompense and a crown. Thus, then, we find in the same truth, two ideas, not contradictory, but correlative; faith given as a grace, and the fruits of faith as a recompense; the believer not laboring for a recompense, but God treating him as if he owed him something; salvation preceding obedience, since the cross, the means of salvation, has preceded the works of the believer, and in another sense, that is to say, in the order of time, obedience preceding salvation, since the *full* enjoyment of the blessings promised to the believer does not commence till after he has finished his work. There is, then, no contradiction, but mutual correspondence between the diverse declarations of the New Testament; and all the passages which it contains respecting the rewards of the faithful, cannot shake its great, its vital principle, namely, that obedience is the fruit of salvation, and that the believer obeys, not that he may be saved, but because he is already saved. Besides, what need have we to confirm all these ideas, when the facts utter a language so clear? Seek among all men who make a profession of

Christianity, those to whom Christianity is real, vital, efficacious, those who have received the gospel in earnest, and apply it with fidelity in their life, and ask them, in view of their good works, what is the principle of these works; and there is not one of them but will answer, I obey because I love; I love because God has pardoned me.

Even if the common morality, that, I mean, which rejects the doctrine of the atonement, should succeed in producing the same effects, the same works as the evangelical morality, the latter would no less produce a striking character of superiority; for, as a modern writer has judiciously remarked, virtue in the one, is but the means; in the other, it is the end. In the one, God is served as a means of happiness; in the other, he is adored for himself. In the one, we cannot free ourselves from mercenary views; in the other, we obey only from a pure and generous impulse. In the one, it is servile fear; in the other, filial reverence. "Having such promises, dearly beloved, let us perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord." In the one, there is self-interest, and consequently bondage; in the other, all is love, that is to say, freedom.

After these reflections, it will be easy for you to appreciate the criticism which we referred to at the beginning of this discourse. You can judge if that is an immoral doctrine, which teaches that all our efforts cannot secure our salvation, and that nothing can be done to merit it. You know now that this doctrine is that of love; and of love in two senses at once, of a merciful love on the part of God, of a grateful love on the part of man. It is not a bargain, but a free covenant between God who has loved us first, and us who love him on account of his very love. What! is duty less sacred to us because we love him who imposes it? What! is the law the less acknowledged by us the more we acknowledge him who has given it? What! do we hate sin less, because its expiation has cost the purest blood in the universe? What! shall we feel ourselves under less obligation to obey, because we cannot estimate all the immensity of the Father's love? Is a doctrine, which doubles the weight of all duties, the force of all precepts, the pressure of all motives, an immoral doctrine? Is it not rather, as we said at the beginning, the best, the only good morality?

That the grace of God may be turned into licentiousness we are not anxious to deny. That such an insult to the majesty of God, the majesty of divine charity, transcends all other baseness, every one will acknowledge. On this account it must be admitted that the greatest manifestation of the goodness of God has given occasion to the greatest manifestation of the wickedness of man. If God had found it necessary to prescribe the use of no other means than such as it would have been impossible for us to abuse, we might not have fallen so low, that everything reveals it, or rather we might not have fallen at all. The effects we have described we have presented as natural, and doubtless they are such, but not as certain in themselves; the will of God and the grace of his Spirit alone secure them. It is true, then, that many have abused them, and that many will abuse them; but those who abuse them do so to their destruction, while those who use them, do so to their unspeakable benefit. The latter have reasoned well, concluded well; the former have made a deplorable mistake; and in every case what cuts off all difficulty is, that while a small number only have accepted and fully understood grace, natural morality has never saved a single person, because it cannot regenerate him; while the dispensation we have explained, is the only one which has proved its efficacy to save the soul. That which changes the heart, which causes it to be born to a new life, which invests all obligations with a sacred authority, and transfers a religious character even to the slightest duties, which, in fine, elevates morality to the region of the absolute and the perfect, is the dispensation of the gospel, and that alone. How far, then, how infinitely far from truth and justice, are those who charge with immorality the doctrine we exhibit.

That doctrine which has been described to us in the nineteenth century, as a shocking paradox, is the same as that professed by all true Christians since Jesus Christ. It is the morality of St. Paul and of St. John, of Fenelon and of Pascal, of Newton and of Oberlin,—it is Christian morality. Salvation by faith is spoken of in your churches, and you receive that expression. Very well! this morality is nothing else than salvation by faith, or the recovery of the soul, by trust in the divine compassion; and how far will not this make the doctrine go back into the past? Under the ancient covenant, believers among the Jews already lived by this faith in the gratuitous mercy of the Lord. Ascending from one generation to another, you see them all drink of the water of this spiritual rock, which is Christ; you see Moses prefer the reproach of Christ to all the treasures of Egypt; you see this divine promise throw its pure and consoling light upon the mournful path of our first parents going forth from the shades of Paradise. This is the morality for which, during four thousand years, God prepared sick and fallen humanity; the morality, whose majestic foundations, so long prepared in darkness, the death of Christ has brought forth into the light; the morality of all future time; in a word, the morality of humanity, which can sustain no other. O, if there is one among you, whom prejudices, like those which have given rise to this discourse, still keep far away from the gospel, we conjure him to study the system of the gospel, and after having admired its beauty, consistency, and harmony, let him ask himself the question, if it is possible for man to invent it? Let him ask himself, if there is not here more than a system; if there is not a fact, vast and divine, the greatest in the entire history of the universe? Let the cross become to him a reality, Jesus Christ a Saviour, the gospel good news, an authentic message from heaven; and let him adopt this morality, alone worthy of God, alone adapted to our wants, and alone capable of regenerating our souls.

NECESSITY OF BECOMING CHILDREN.

"Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."—MATT. xviii. 3.

I HAVE sought, in the preceding discourse, to render Christianity acceptable to your reason; I have constantly attached the chain of my arguments to the immutable principles of nature. I have appealed from yourselves to yourselves. I have thus, as it were, erected a tribunal before which the religion of Jesus Christ has appeared to be judged. What I have done, was, in my judgment, permitted to me. Preaching ought always to set out from a point admitted by all, in order to arrive at one which is not; with men convinced of the truth of Christianity, it sets out from the declarations of the gospel itself; with those who are not thus convinced, it must set out from a point further back, a point which can be nothing else than some one of those convictions which are common to all our hearers, imparted by nature, or acquired by study. We have no regret, then, at the course we have followed; but we acknowledge that the attitude in which we have been forced to place Christianity, shall we venture to say it, of being accused by you, and defended by us, is not such as we should have preferred; and we have not been able to conceal from ourselves the danger both to you and to us, almost inseparable from such a method, By continually invoking the testimony of your reason, we had to fear inflating that very reason; and on the other hand, of giving to the Christian revelation a false air of philosophical system and theory. We may also have given some occasion to believe that the work of conversion to Christianity, is accomplished entirely by human means; that one becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ in no other way, than he becomes a disciple of Plato; that in this marvellous transformation, reason and philosophy accomplish the whole; in a word, that the proud thinker could make that long and important transition from the world to Christianity, without losing anything, or yielding anything on the way.

It is this impression which we shall now endeavor to destroy, if we have permitted it to be formed in you. Christianity, which has seen us patiently defending its rights before our petty tribunal, must, from this moment, assume the accent which becomes it, and dissipate the illusions you may have formed touching its position and your own. Have you thought, perhaps, that it sought nothing but your adherence, and, too well satisfied with having gained it, would leave you at rest, as after an affair amicably settled between it and you? Have you thought, by declaring its pretensions acceptable, by pronouncing, so to speak, its sentence of acquittal, you had done all that it required, and that its relations to you would continue on the same footing of equality on which they commenced? Assuredly you were greatly deceived. It must, by no means, be concluded that you are converted, because you have yielded to the historical, the moral, or the philosophical evidence, with which it is irradiated in every part. That work, to take it in its true nature, is not even begun; all that we have said, and all that you have believed, is scarcely a preface to it; you have not yet read a single syllable of the book itself. The road to the kingdom of heaven has been pointed out to you; but you have not entered that kingdom. Such as you are naturally, you cannot enter it, for, says the Master himself to you, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."

Remember the reply of Archimedes to the tyrant of Sicily, who grew impatient with the slowness of his method, or the difficulty of his theorems, "There is no royal road to science." With greater reason we may say the same to you, respecting our subject. Christianity does not offer, does not know any privileged road. I acknowledge, that so long as you make inquiry touching the truth of the Christian revelation, the nature of these preliminary investigations is such as to leave undisturbed the sentiment of your independence and your dignity. This part of the route is wide; it has room for all your pretensions. Here you can enlarge and expatiate at your ease, and occupy it entirely with the sumptuous array of your science. But this road, however wide, terminates for you, and for every one, at a gate so strait and low, that far from being able to pass it, with all your magnificence, you cannot even enter it, except on condition of lessening yourselves, and exchanging, so to speak, the stature of a full grown man, for that of a little child. "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven."

Is this the same as saying, that at the decisive moment on which depends an entrance into the kingdom of heaven, man is called upon to abandon his reason, to regard as null and void all the knowledge he has acquired, and that the childhood, which is made a condition of his admission, is nothing but ignorance and stupidity? Those who can believe this, forget that the New Testament everywhere supposes the contrary, and that the Christian religion includes in itself the richest source of intellectual development. They forget that from the very first, it has rendered popular the loftiest ideas; that the apostles were not afraid to say to men already converted, "We speak as unto wise men;" and that in one of the epistles is found this remarkable antithesis, "Be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men." 1 Cor. xiv. 20. A man in reason,—a child in heart,—such must the Christian be; such is the disposition with which every one must enter the kingdom of heaven. I suppose you to have the first; have you the second?

So long as you were only examining, in the pride of your reason, the evidences of Christianity, its records and its testimonies, everything was allowed to you which is allowed to full-grown men; you were required to be nothing else. But when, at the conclusion of these independent researches, your conviction has bound you to the doctrine of Christ; when by any means, you have acquired assurance that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of which each of you may well say, he is chief; when, to take a particular case, that great thinker, that subtle genius, that learned man, has ascertained that he has been picked up in the highways of the world, as an abandoned child, without protection, without clothing or food, without power to proceed on his way, or even voice to inquire the road, will it become him to affect the airs of a being of importance? And will he not be bound to confess himself a child, let himself be treated as such, become such in reality?

What, then, in the eyes of God, is he whom the world honors as a wise man? What is he but an ignorant one? What he that is strong among men, but weakness itself? What he that is intelligent, but a fool? What he that is rich, but a pauper? Even if he should have discovered new heavens, or founded an empire on the earth, what is he in the eyes of God but a madman who has forgotten the first of truths; who is incapable of spelling the first syllable of the name with which the heavens resound, and which angels adore; who cannot fulfil, cannot even begin to fulfil, the first, the holiest, and the simplest of his duties, and who with all his knowledge of nature, estranges himself so far even from nature, that he adores what he ought to despise, and despises what he ought to adore!

That which a little child is, with reference to the knowledge which such a man possesses, he is himself with reference to the knowledge of God. But that which a child has, he has not. The child has, for all power, the consciousness of his feebleness; for all science, the consciousness of his ignorance; for all wisdom, the instinct which carries him towards his natural protectors. The man of the world has not this wisdom. He wishes, unaided, to raise himself from the cradle, where he lies in his weakness. He wishes to find the road for himself, in a region of which he is ignorant. He rejects the hand which is held out to sustain him, and ever pre-occupied with his part as a full-grown man, he will not recollect that he is only a child

This disposition, so natural and so common among those who are destitute of Christian convictions, is often seen perpetuated even among those whose reason has been conquered by the gospel. They are ready, in their character of full-grown men, to sign the deed which acknowledges the gospel, but they cannot persuade themselves to become children, that is, to become Christians. It is here they encounter the great stone of stumbling which their wisdom had not foreseen. It is here they stop disconcerted, as if caught in a snare. It was not with this prospect that they embraced Christianity. They were deceived; they have been led further than they wished to go; they will not go back, that is henceforth impossible; but neither will they go forward.

They must go forward. They must put their heart in harmony with their intellect. Christianity is not a system out of us, but a life within us. Christianity is a renovation of the soul; it is nothing less. A Christian is not a man who has expelled from his mind one theory to give place to another. He is a man humbled; who feels that he can live only upon mercy; who adores, who blesses that mercy; who nourishes himself on the promises of God as his only hope; who continually renounces himself, and devotes his life daily to the Saviour. He does not live himself, but his Saviour lives in him. And the life which he still lives in the flesh, he lives by faith on the Son of God, who hath loved him.

It would be very agreeable, doubtless, and very flattering to his self-love, to present himself to the world as a man who, amongst all systems, had made his choice, and is ready to furnish evidence of his good judgment, by giving an account of the reasons which have led him to embrace Christianity as a system eminently rational.

But the question at issue is a very different one from that of a mere profession. Look at a child. He not only does not blush to acknowledge his father, but he glories in it. It never occurs to the mind of that young creature, that the father whom he respects, is not respected by all. He places him in his estimation far above all other men. He yields to him respect and obedience in every place. Even in the one where his father is obliged to take a humble attitude, he perceives not that his father is not to every one what he is to him ; or did he perceive it, he would be astonished and afflicted, and say so in sufficiently decisive tones. Ask from him who is yet only a philosophical Christian these testimonies, these acknowledgments, this open and honest profession. Require him to declare, without embarrassment and circumlocution, and in all places equally, his exclusive trust in the blood of the new covenant. Let him place himself at the foot of the cross, humble, poor, and wretched. Let him, full of love for his father, seized with admiration of that glorious goodness, feeling that nothing is great, nothing beautiful by the side of that divine work, give free expression to the emotions of his heart, and speak of the news of salvation as news always fresh, always interesting, news to which the attention ought to be devoted by choice, in the midst of all other news. Ask for all this, and you will ask in vain. He has not believed in order that he might come to such an issue. He did not anticipate this. In truth, you astonish him greatly.

A little child has, with reference to the relations of society, views more philosophical than any philosopher. To him men are men. Custom does not, in his view, communicate to them any new quality. He loves them if they are good; he loves them if they love his father. In this respect, the Christian is a child. He permits the relations of society to exist; he accepts social distinctions for temporal use; and frequently conforms to them, from Christian prudence; but his heart, internally, levels all these distinctions. Christian love is the great leveller. He is not afraid to treat all men as brethren; for he sees in them the children of his father; and if there be any to whom his heart yields a preference, they are those who love his father. The differences of rank not only do not arrest his love, but barriers more difficult to overleap, those which are raised by difference of culture, intelligence and character, he scales with equal ease. He has always something to say to the simple, something to learn from the ignorant, some sympathy with characters the most diverse from his own. Neither weariness nor disgust accompanies him into society thus diversified. One great common interest brings all minds into harmony. Here all feel themselves equally learned and ignorant, equally foolish and wise. The differences which subsist in another sphere are not remarked. They are, with reference to the final aim of life, of but very little importance. Wherever the Christian meets a Christian, he finds an equal. On the contrary, nothing is more foreign to the Christian in theory. In order to form a common bond between him and the Christian, something more than Christianity is needed. There must be, if not equality of rank, at least equality of culture. He has nothing to say to the unlettered Christian; he feels ill at ease in his company; he dreads it. He must have similitude of views; a difference disturbs him. He cannot raise himself above the impression which produces an opinion so little rational. He cannot abstract himself from forms, to attach himself to principles, that is, to Christianity itself. He seeks equals and fellows, rather than brethren.

A little child can do nothing of himself; but he expects everything from his father. He knows that he is loved by him, and that he will refuse him nothing that is necessary. He prays. The life of a little child is a prayer. What reason has man to think and to act in the same way? But to pray, says the wise man, to pray! That is not natural to my heart. Everything, indeed, which can be said of prayer, I know and hold for truth. But in spite of that, I do not feel inclined to it. It appears as if it were something foreign to me, an affair of another. I seem to myself so singular in prayer, as if I were doing something learnt or copied. Had I thought of all this, in becoming a Christian?

A little child believes what his father tell him. It is his father! Does he not know all that a child needs to know; and would he deceive him? This amiable instinct is the instinct of a Christian. He knows what his father has spoken; that is enough for him. He will not submit to the control of human wisdom the authentic communications of divine wisdom. After having believed that the gospel is from God, he will believe what the gospel says. The Christian in theory is followed by the pride of reason into the enclosure at the gates of which it ought to have stopped. He still wishes to judge, to choose, to adapt to his use, to prescribe to God what God ought to say, to reform the axioms of revealed truth, to re-make the Bible, after having accepted it. Do you speak to him of submission? Do you remind him that he has promised it, and that, at least, he ought to leave those mysteries undisturbed, whose inviolability he had previously acknowledged? His reason, accustomed to enter everywhere, is surprised that any door should be shut upon it; he had never estimated the extent of his engagements. He begins to be vexed; and feeling at once the impossibility of receding or advancing, impelled by pride, retained by fear, he remains immovable and inactive, on the precise limit which separates Christianity from the world.

The passage from knowledge to possession, from belief to life, our Lord has strikingly represented by the figure, so singular at first sight, of a return from mature age to childhood. While in the world, the preceptor says to the child, Come, act like a man, Jesus Christ, our divine Teacher, says to the man, Act like a child. Be in heart, with relation to God and your fellow-men, what a little child is with reference to his father, and all the persons by whom he is surrounded. The infancy of the heart is the trait which distinguishes the Christian in fact, from the Christian in theory. But that infancy of heart, what is it but humility? What distinguishes a child from a man, if it is not a sort of natural humility? It is humility, then, which draws the line of demarkation between the Christian who believes, and the Christian who lives. It is humility, then, which is wanting to the former, and which it remains for him to acquire, in order to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Let us here explain ourselves thoroughly, and not give you occasion to suppose that one virtue is more than another the condition of salvation. Jesus Christ has only desired us to understand, that his religion is of such a nature, that if any one will not consent to humble himself, he cannot be his disciple. He might equally have said that no one can be such, unless he love. He has said so, and his disciples have repeated it. But humility itself is a proof that one loves; he who loves has no difficulty in humbling himself; he who does not humble himself, does not love. He who can see the Son of God descend to the earth, partake of our sufferings, degrade himself to the rank of a malefactor, and drink opprobrium like water, that *he*, a sinner, may enjoy eternal life in the bosom of the Father; he who sees this, and believes it, and still imagines that the disciple is more than his Master, and the servant more than his Lord; he who cannot persuade himself to drink one drop of the cup which Jesus has drained; he who cannot lay at the foot of the cross his frivolous pretensions, his independence of spirit, his confidence in himself, his petty glory, his vanity; he who pretends to rest upon a throne in the presence of Jesus bound to the stake of infamy, unquestionably does not love. And, on the other hand, he who is not affected by such devotion, who can believe in Christ, without loving him, whose heart does not permit itself to be caught in the snare of mercy, he doubtless is not humbled. Principles which take each other's places by turns, love and humility, cannot exist separately in the soul. Go down into its depths, and you will find them united there, blended in a single sentiment, whose different qualities are developed together, by the same emotion, and the same virtue.

But if reason tells us that the gospel is of such a nature that we cannot receive it in deed and in truth, without becoming children, reason can do nothing more. It abandons us in this affair, as in others, at the point where the true difficulty begins. Reason is not the efficient cause of any of the emotions which spring up within us. All that it can do is to conduct us into the presence of facts; then it retires, and leaves the facts to affect and modify us. It is thus that it places us in the presence of the fact of redemption, a fact which includes this singularity, that however well fitted it may appear by its nature to touch our hearts, it yet meets there the most formidable obstacles. In theory, we say to ourselves, that in this fact everything is so combined as to move the heart; in practice, it would appear as if it were only fitted to revolt it. Thus the gospel does not ascribe to our natural faculties the power to believe in it, and appropriate it to ourselves. "No one can believe," it says to us, "that Jesus is the Son of God, but by the Holy Spirit;" which doubtless means, that no one can, without the aid of the Holy Spirit, endue himself with the dispositions of a true disciple of Jesus Christ. No one, to speak after the manner of our text, can enter the kingdom of heaven, except he be *converted*, and become *a little child.*

Hence this transformation into infancy does not even belong to you. All that you can find in yourselves is the conviction that, proud and independent by nature, you must ask God to break down that haughtiness, to reduce you to the measure of little children, to give you their hearts. And it is not you, learned men, and men of genius alone, who need to ask this. Your pride does not surpass that of other men, as your talents surpass theirs. They too, in their mediocrity, are haughty and proud, for they are men; humble and modest, perhaps, with relation to men, haughty and proud with reference to God. Their reason makes no less pretensions than yours; their dignity is not less exacting; it costs them as much to abase themselves, as if, like you, they had their heads in the clouds. To be children, little children, to walk wherever they are led, unable to quit the hand which guides them, to depend on the divine mercy for the supply of their daily wants, to associate with the humble, to be seen in the company of little ones, to put themselves on equality with the poor in spirit,—what abasement, what disgrace! Happy, however, they who have accepted that disgrace, and covered themselves with it! The shame of earth is the glory of heaven. If it yet shocks you, if you are not yet pleased to become the children of God, know that, notwithstanding your professions, you are not yet in the kingdom of heaven; you are on the threshold of a door open to your inspection, but forbidden to your entrance. You must beseech God to break to pieces your pride, by giving you a lively consciousness of your sinful state, a profound view of your misery, an implacable hatred of yourselves, such as sin has made you, and a solemn conviction of your danger. Tell him to cast you down, to put you so low in your own esteem, that you may feel yourselves but too happy to be born again simple children under the paternal hand. Then, not only will the religious convictions you have acquired profit you, but they will no longer be a burden, a care, an importunate thought, too oppressive, wherever you may drag it. They will constitute the foundation of your peace, the source of your happiness, a life in your life, a life in your death, your hope in time, your glory in eternity.

THE CLAIMS OF HEAVEN AND EARTH ADJUSTED.

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."—Col. iii. 2.

This precept, and a multitude of analogous declarations spread through the Scriptures, are a subject of offence to many readers. They see in them the providence of God contradicted by his word. It is God himself that has placed us on the earth, and it is he who wills that all our thoughts should be in heaven. It is God who has placed us, by our bodies, our wants, and our faculties, in a close and necessary relation with the world; yet it is he who wishes to bind our hearts to eternity, by indestructible ties. It is he who admits of no division, no compromise, and proposes to us the choice between heaven and earth, as a choice between life and death.

Ought it to surprise us, say superficial readers of the New Testament, that, pressed between two opposing necessities, we should decide, after some uncertainty, either to throw our whole life into the future, or lose it entirely in the present? If some minds, struck with the instability of the world, hasten to flee from under the roof of a ruinous edifice, retire into the profound solitude of their own thoughts, concentrate themselves upon a single idea, that of eternity, and renounce the activity of social life, in order to consecrate themselves entirely to the care of their salvation; while others, abandoned to the influence of external impressions, spirits fickle, active, curious, governed by the instinct of sociability, and the charm of life, engage, body and soul, in the bustle of human affairs, and do not permit a single thought to escape towards the invisible world and the things of eternity, we once more inquire, ought we to be astonished at it?

Alas, no, it is not surprising. We need not be astonished to see the false reason of man corrupt and bend to its liking the simple doctrines of the gospel. But if we embrace the whole of its teachings, we shall really find nothing in the gospel which tends, even in the slightest degree, to the separation or divorce of our two lives, to the mutilation of our double nature. We are not taught there, that God, in giving us the gospel, intended violently to rend our nature, and to place in competition two necessities, equally imperative. On the contrary, we are persuaded, while reading that divine book, that God has been pleased to establish in our life a perfect and unalterable unity, to form of the two principles of which man is composed, a single being; not to destroy one activity for the benefit of the other, but to give to both one aim, and to the whole life a single significance; not to kill, but to regenerate man.

The anchorite of ancient times, the partially enlightened believer, who, in our day, would bring back the life of the anchorite, both misapprehend the design of God. If Christian perfection had required their retirement from this world, God would have made for them a separate world, where the wants of the body, the necessities of physical existence, and the engagements of society would never have disturbed the current of their serene contemplations. God has not made such a world. By invincible ties has he bound them to the world of sense, and the relations of society. He has compelled them to labor for their fellow-creatures, and their fellow-creatures for them. And no less has he demanded that they should labor for their salvation.

Indeed, our situation would be favorable, and our task easy, if it were only necessary to leave society, in order to find God; if God did not permit us to breathe the dust of the arena, or to hear the noise of combat; if we could triumph without having fought; if religion consisted not in overcoming temptations, but in encountering none; if it were permitted us, in order to become saints, to cease to be men; and if we could cast far away from us *the noble burden of humanity*, as a great orator, in ancient times, expressed himself.*

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* There was a celebrated people of antiquity, (the Spartans,) a part of whom had succeeded in subjugating the other, and causing them to accept the severest laws. The conquered and the conquerors continued to occupy the same soil, and to form, as it were, a single people. But the difference of their respective positions showed itself in the difference of their employments. The conquerors aimed to arrive, as a people, at an ideal and unexampled perfection. Consequently military exercise, the strictest order, privations the most painful, became the foundation of their life. None of the members of this association were permitted to go beyond the bounds of the republic, nor was a stranger allowed to penetrate within that sacred territory. It might be called a military monastery, subjected to the strictest rules. But as it was necessary, after all, in the midst of this sublime discipline, to live, the vanquished race were charged with providing for this. On them was imposed the vulgar, but indispensable task of cultivating the earth, of exercising trades, in a word, of supplying all the material wants, which even the loftiest spirits cannot hinder themselves from feeling. Thus, on the one side, improvement, on the other, labor; on the one, intellectual and moral life, on the other, material life and mechanical employments; on the one,

That the world, in its actual constitution, has its temptations, its dangers, and its snares. we are not permitted to doubt. That it is wise to shun dissipation, to avoid even useless agitations, to seek, as much as may be, the repose of a retired life, there to refresh the soul, and very frequently to enter the closet in order to examine ourselves before God, are maxims with which it is important to be thoroughly penetrated. The peaceful uniformity of the pastoral life did not excuse Abraham from seeking a place favorable to prayer, under the shade of the oaks of Mamre. How often did our Saviour himself retire to the mountain in order to elevate his pure spirit to his Father and ours. But in the same

a polity almost become a species of religion, on the other, industry without liberty, and very nearly without thought. Such was the organization of that strange people. This state of things is a feeble image; still it is an image of the system we oppose. In fact, this system divides mankind into two classes, two communities; the first of whom save their souls by withdrawing from the obligations of society, while the others destroy their souls by submitting to them. The former seek the food which endureth to life eternal, the latter ruin themselves by seeking the food that perisheth. And, finally, what is not only strange, but abominable, the one class labor, at the expense of their salvation, that the other may be at liberty to secure it; for in the end it comes to this. However spiritual some may be, they have bodies, temporal interests, and families. They need the products of nature to feed them, the products of art to clothe them, laws to live in peace, and a government to protect them; and all these wants, reducing them only to strict necessity, suppose a development of knowledge,—a mass of studies, of which it is difficult, at first sight, to form an idea. The possession of so much of these gross and absolutely necessary commodities as would be sufficient to render the return of famine impossible, attaches itself, as all will admit, to the highest speculations of science, and to the most ingenious inventions of the arts. So that, since it is impossible to live without food, without clothing and laws, it would be absolutely necessary, in the system under consideration, that one part of the human family must destroy their souls in order to secure the happiness of those which are saved.

degree that these precautions are conformed to Christian wisdom, so is the idea chimerical, that all that we have to do to flee from the world, is to avoid contact with society.

Vain hope! in the heart of deserts, and in the deepest solitudes we may yet find the world. It is not met with altogether in the hurry of business or in the agitations of society. It lies in the depths of our heart. The world consists of our passions, which solitude does not extinguish, and to which it sometimes lends fresh energy. All the evils and troubles of life do not come, to borrow the expression of a great philosopher, "from not being able to remain in our chamber." They come from our not being able to escape from our natural corruption; a corruption which follows us to the recesses of forests and of deserts, as it accompanies us into the streets and squares of our cities; whilst, in the midst of the most complicated and difficult business, in the anxiety even of high functions, the Christian finds in his heart a solitude, a tranquil world, a retreat more inaccessible than that of his closet, where he lives by his soul, while his body is given to a thousand cares, where his spirit peacefully composes itself, even when his person seems to be diffused and dissipated. Many a hermit lives in the world; many a man of the world lives in solitude.

To renounce the necessities of our earthly sojourn, to regard all temporal activity as perdition, is to insult the wisdom of God, which has imposed them upon us. What! could he create a world, the necessary effect of which would be to abuse himself? What! are nature, society, labor, the institutions of his providence, so many things he has cursed? On the contrary, is not the world, in the variety of its aspects and movements, a temple, all the parts of which are destined for his glory? What! do idleness, apathy, isolation, uselessness, alone honor him? Far from us be such a thought! It is not by remaining motionless in the heavens, that the stars celebrate his greatness and power, but by revolving swiftly in their immense orbits; and it is from our activity, from the free and extensive development of our powers, that God has been pleased to derive a part of his glory.

There are dangers in social life! Certainly, I believe it; they are such as to make us tremble. But God is doubtless not ignorant of this; it is not certainly for nothing that he has promised his Holy Spirit; or that Jesus has said to his disciples, "In the world ye shall have afflictions; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Since it has pleased God to place us in these formidable relations, can we doubt that his grace provides for the exigencies which are his work? To believe otherwise, would be to call in question the goodness, and perhaps the justice of God.

Ties of family and of country, culture of arts and of knowledge, industrial and social activity, ye are the indispensable conditions of our existence; ye are the road through which we must pass; but ye are not the end of our being. That end is heaven. But the error lies in confounding the road with the end, the means with the result. The error lies in attaching ourselves to earth, which is the road, not to heaven, which is the end.

This distinction is conformed to our text. It does not say, Do not occupy yourselves with the things of the earth, but, Do not set your affections on the things of the earth. Act as travellers who give to their business all requisite attention, but are in haste to return to their native land. Act,—but for heaven; labor,—but for God.

Labor for God; because it is your vocation, primitive and unchangeable, your supreme duty, the first and last end of your existence. Alas! of all ideas, the most absurd is the most diffused. As if we existed by ourselves, we live for ourselves! Creatures dependent at every point of our existence, we have made ourselves our own law, and our own object! Committing sacrilege every day, we conceal ourselves from our Creator! Oh! it is this that marks, even in noble spirits, the profound and general depravity of the human race. This is the seal of our reprobation, that we have forgotten why and for what we were sent into the world. All evil comes from this; and each particular sin disappears in this great and primal sin. Christians! I adjure you, by your very name,—live for him who has loved you. He had infinite rights over us as our Creator, but, by a miracle of love, he has added infinite to infinite. He has consented that righteous blood should flow for you. He has given up to the pangs of death, Him, in whom his own holiness was reflected, as in the purest mirror. At the intercession of his Son, his wrath was turned away from you, to fall on that Son himself; Christ became sin, that your sins might be forgotten. And now, thanks be to him, ye may enter, creatures degraded and defiled, race adulterous and dishonored! ye may enter, "with everlasting joy on your heads," into the house of your celestial bridegroom, to adorn yourselves anew with his glorious name, and to partake with angels, in a destiny of honor and peace. After this, is it necessary to say to you, Christians, labor for

God; attach yourselves to things above? Ah! if the name you bear has not told you all this already, all the words in the world will tell you nothing.

Work for God, set your affection on things above; because such an activity is the only one which offers to your energies an employment worthy of them. By acting only with reference to the world, what use can you make of those powers really proportioned to them? Whatever you do, you will always fall below your capacity, and a whole world thrown into your soul would not fill its abyss. You may fill up your time, by attaching a work to each of your hours, but would it fill up life, thus to fill up its time? Life! Is it only a dimension? Is it merely a line without breadth, a chain which you must only take care to have unbroken? When every hour of a long life has been marked by an employment or a thought, does it follow thence that you have lived? O immortal beings, creatures of God! life consists in the employment of all your powers; and you have divine powers. Life consists in the fulfilment of your destiny; and your destiny is heaven! Do not tell me you have lived, you who have a soul to aspire to the infinite, but which you have chained down to finite objects; a heart to love God, whom you have not loved; an intelligence to serve Him, but whom you have not served. You have passed through life, at the side of those who lived, but you have not lived. To live, my brethren, is to perform a work which lasts. It is to accumulate something more than vain recollections. It is to convert all our present life into the future; it is to prepare for its death; it is to make it in advance triumphant, glorious, full of immortality. To live, is to act on earth as a citizen of heaven.

But at the close of our course, to be reduced to say: I have labored, but have already received all my recompense. For a perishable work, I have received, from the world, a perishable reward. The world has my labor, and keeps it. I have received its pay, but I cannot retain it; for I am about to leave the world. I leave it, with empty hands, with exhausted powers, with beggared spirit, and withered heart. I leave it, but I know not whither I am going. Alas! why have I lived? What business had I to live? Have I truly lived? Is it not a dream? Was it, then, that I should consume myself for nothing, that I was brought into existence by my Creator? Did I not feel something within me, greater than everything I have yet seen everything I have yet felt, everything I have yet done? Has not my soul urged me a thousand times, to take my flight above all sensible objects? Yet what have I done but to prostitute that soul to objects of sense, and to everything which my awakened conscience, to-day, calls vanity? O deception, illusion, misery! O life lost! O spirit abused, dissipated, degraded by vain thoughts! O wretched past, without hope for the future!

I say nothing of the remorse which ought always to crown a life thus lost, but which does not always crown it. Last and painful blessing, or prelude and foretaste of the greatest pangs, remorse, we know, does not always assist at that solemn and mournful review which the worldling involuntarily takes of his past life, when about to die. Upon this last and terrible subject, supply what I do not say, and which no one can say but feebly. Represent to yourselves the busy worldling, arriving, exhausted and panting, with the long chain of his miserable toils, at the foot of the eternal tribunal; and, penetrated with horror at the picture, you will no longer permit us to say, but you will say yourselves, Let us labor for God; let us set our affections on things above, not on things on the earth.

I am aware that some may say to us, "We cannot suitably care for the things of the earth, without taking some interest in them. We cannot succeed in a situation without a certain inclination for the things of that situation, nor in a study without a taste for it, nor in any particular career, without loving it. Can it be believed that our interest in heaven can take the place ot all these other interests? Can it be supposed that the mere sentiment of duty should supply a sufficient stimulus? Do we not, on the contrary, learn that the more we are attached to the things of heaven, the less fitness have we for the things of earth? What then becomes of that boasted harmony of which you speak?"

The objection has weight; and I wish no one to conceal from himself its force. It is certain that if we confined ourselves to contrasting two duties, that of being occupied assiduously with the things of earth, and that of loving only the things of heaven, we should only augment, instead of removing, the difficulty. But with a little attention, you will, I hope, see the objection rests on an error. It consists in taking the words of the apostle, "the things above," in a too spiritual sense. The things above are not precisely those of another world, but those of another sphere than the habitual one of our thoughts. They are not the things above our heads, but those which are above our natural sentiments. The things on high are here below, if we wish it; the things on high are the dispositions of a heart renewed by the Spirit from above; they are all those sentiments, motives, impulses, which belong to a regenerated soul. To set our affection on things above, is to set our affection on God himself; it is to subordinate our life to him; it is to seek and find God in everything.

And what shall hinder any of you from finding Him in nature, the secrets of which you study with so much perseverance; in the functions you fulfil with so much interest; in that art you cultivate with so much ardor? Why! Is not God in all that is true, beautiful, great, useful? Is he not in everything, except evil? Is not everything which is good only himself? And in cultivating the different domains of nature, of art, and of civil life, is it not God himself with which the Christian is occupied; and in each of these things that interest him, is it not God also whom he admires and loves?

Loving God, then, is the secret which reconciles all. This is the secret of being occupied, with interest, in the things of earth, without ceasing to love the things of heaven. To love God is to love the life he has made, and the death he has ordained. But, ye divided hearts, who have dreamed of a compromise between heaven and earth, and have appeared incessantly tormented with fears and scruples, now know the cause of your condition; ye fear God, but ye do not love him. Piety, doubtless, also has its scruples; but let us take care not to confound the scruples of a delicate love, which is afraid of not giving everything to its object, with the apprehensions of a selfish heart, which is destitute of the courage to do one of two things, either to give itself wholly to God, or wholly to the world. "Is this permitted; is this not permitted? Is this worldly; is this Christian? May we see such society, form such an enterprise, devote ourselves to such study?" This, in the mouth of a son, signifies, How shall I keep my heart for my father? But, in the mouth of a slave, How far can I follow the desires of my heart, without irritating my master? Miserable and vain discussions, the principle of which it is easy to discover. What is this perpetual bargaining between man and God? What sort of a Christian is he who is perpetually occupied in minutely adjusting God's part and his own, and ever filled with the dread of making his own too little? What sort of a believer is he who pretends to divide himself into two, the worldling and the believer, as if there was no absolute necessity that the worldling should be altogether a worldling, and the believer altogether a believer? What kind of a man is he who has two hearts, the one for the world, the other for God? What kind of devotion is that which makes its own conditions, which keeps its reserved rights, which stipulates its indemnities? O, love is a better casuist. Love has speedily cut the difficulty; everything for God, nothing for self, is its motto. Everything for God, provided God is mine. Then let him enrich or impoverish my life, let him extend or limit my activity, let him gratify or oppose my tastes; if I have my God, I have all things at once. It is him I wish to serve, him I wish to please; the rest is a matter of indifference.

If you love God, you will easily and at once see what employments are incompatible with his service. The love of God will endow you with a new sense, with a sure and delicate tact, by means of which you will recognize without difficulty, the works which please, and those that displease him; for all kinds of activity are not good. This is the first effect of the love of

God. There is another. It gives to the soul very great freedom. It renders legitimate a multitude of works, which could not be such without it. If you love God, you can enter into the bustle of the world, into the business of public life, into the culture of the arts and sciences; for all this you do for the glory of God, with gratitude and submission; all this leads you to God, instead of taking you far from Him; and, if I may say so, your courses which, in appearance, are the most adventurous, never remove you far from port. The most elevated functions, and lowest offices, the greatest enterprises, and the most petty details, the work of a year, and the work of an hour, all are done for the Lord; consequently, all are permitted, all are good. But beyond this sphere, and without this direction, all is bad, even that which generally passes for legitimate and praiseworthy; all is bad, for God is not in it. You can still be useful, merit and obtain esteem; but with reference to God, to yourselves, to eternity, you have done a work, vain, ungrateful, and wretched.

Ill-instructed casuists, whose delicacy "strains out the gnat, and swallows the camel," abandon, abandon the idle scruples which attach to some isolated actions, to some particular details of your life, and at once bring into question your entire life. It is of that life as a whole, of its general character, of the spirit which animates it, which it concerns you, before all, to form an estimate. It is not some good works, it is not a factitious virtue, laboriously studied, and laboriously imitated, which will prepare you for heaven. It is not upon this or that observance neglected or performed, upon such an action permitted or forbidden, or in itself indifferent, that the chances of your eternity will turn.

Doubtless each of your actions has its moral value, its character, its color; but each, also, is but the natural product of a principle, and in this respect has a character which, rather than its own, represents your moral value. It is this internal value which you must know; it is this also which God knows, and according to which he will appreciate and judge you. Do you know the standard by which he will do this? He will measure you by your love to him. He will inquire only about one thing, Are you his, by your heart? But his standard ought to be yours; and in this question,—Am I acting for God; is it my desire to do his will?—ought all your casuistry to be contained.

See then, what wind fills your sails, and you will know whither you are going. Demand of yourselves an account of the sentiment which controls your life, and you will know what it is worth. Every one is able upon this point to give a precise answer; besides, here are two tests, the application of which will leave you no further uncertainty.

In the midst of the occupations and the cares which necessarily bind you to the earth, do you love to occupy yourselves with the things of heaven? Have you a relish for the word of God? Are you pleased to consult it, to elevate, by its means, the point of view from which you regard all your affairs, to stretch, as it were, over the limited horizon of your terrestrial life, the boundless horizon of eternity? Many, when they involuntarily bring these two views together, find no relation, no harmony between them, but rather, a sort of contrariety. The aspect of heaven, and of divine things, disturbs them in their labors; it deranges and disenchants them; it vexes and oppresses them. They could wish they had never cast their eyes in that direction; for that of which they had a glimpse has made them fear, for a moment, that their life, which hitherto appeared filled up so well, is, in fact, filled up with vanity. Thenceforward, they shun this view, and these reflections; and, in order to protect their labors from such painful control, plunge themselves wholly in the present. In proportion as that vision of divine things is weakened and effaced, they speedily resume their former ardor; but they are not active and persevering in the things of their profession, except on condition of caring as little as possible for their heavenly vocation. And yet they do not profess to renounce that heavenly vocation They are entirely satisfied to have in reserve an asylum and place of repose; resembling in this the prodigal son, wandering in the highways of the world, it pleases them now and then to think of their Father's house, but not to dwell there. They are pleased to believe; they would dread to lose their religious conviction; but they dread still more to see it become too strong. They fear those unexpected moments, brought on by God himself, when the truth of religion suddenly appears all radiant with evidence, and all powerful with reality. They dread that tyranny of a living faith which would overturn their life, disconcert their plans, give another course to their activity, and destroy the position they have assumed in the world. Frightened at that lightning, they hasten to shut their eyes, and, by a strange contradiction, dread both scepticism and their faith. Brethren, do such people labor for the earth, or for heaven?

I have spoken of another touchstone. It is the thought of death. Let any one who doubts as to the legitimacy of his efforts, and the employment of his life, place himself in the presence of death. Let him, with closed eyes, consider his last hour, that hour, when, as it has been said with propriety, "There remains nothing with us, but what we have given." Let him for a moment feel, that he no longer belongs to the earth, that he lies upon his funeral bed, that he listens to that solemn warning, " Son of man, return, give an account of thy stewardship." Let him say to himself, that in a few hours, lying under the ground, he will be as much a stranger to what occurs six feet above him, as if he had never formed a part in the number of the living. Let him see vanishing and becoming extinct, the splendor of renown, and the power of reputation, his personal influence, his property, his name and his memory ; and proceeding to his last inventory, let him take account of what remains to him, that is, I repeat it, of what he has given. Well, has this activity, these labors and services, this fortune, or this poverty, been given, as it might be wished, wholly to God ? Has he performed works which can follow him ? Can he take with him into the other world, and lay down at the feet of his Master, all his labors, all his studies, all his life ? Was it for God that he used his position, fulfilled his charge, cultivated his mind, increased his fortune ? On which side was his life, apparent in the world, or hid with Christ in God ? Is he about to be separated from everything, or is he about to find everything ? Is he going to die, or is he going to live ? If in the presence of this solemn thought of death, he does not feel his past life a burden, which oppresses him, but as wealth which supports him ; if the thought of the activity which is about to be interrupted does not inspire him with regret, but with hope, then that activity is good; he may yield himself to it without fear; for, in occupying himself with the things of earth, he labors for those of heaven.

This, my brethren, is what we would impress upon your mind, and upon our own. No truth is more important. A moment will infallibly come, when it will appear evident to us; but we ought to anticipate that moment; for the same truth which is salutary to-day, may be overwhelming to-morrow. Salutary while life yet belongs to us, overwhelming when that life is leaving us. If, then, our life needs to be reformed, let us reform it; that is to say, let us reform our hearts, "For out of the heart proceed the springs of life."

Reform our hearts! what an expression, my brethren! Ah! when the dead in their tombs shall be heard crying out, We live, it will be permitted to sinful men also, to cry out, We reform our hearts. To love God above all other things, to love nothing but in subordination to Him, to submit our life to a single principle, and our conduct to a single impulse, can this be done by a simple act of our will? Upon this point let us consult our own experience. It declares to us our profound incapacity to displace, by ourselves, the centre of our life. Consult the experience of believers. They inform us, that it is by faith in a crucified, glorified Saviour, that they have found the power to do it. Consult the New Testament. It teaches us that in this great work, "it is God that produces in us the will and the execution, according to his good pleasure." Let us not seek to deceive ourselves; let us not boast some external reforms, of which we have found ourselves capable; the reformation of our habits is nothing, without the reformation of our heart. Let us frankly acknowledge our weakness ; let us ask, let us entreat, let us pray without ceasing, till assistance come, till our heart is altogether where our treasure is ; till we are one in thought and affection with Jesus, till we have, in our life, but one aim, the service and glory of the Father who sent him. May the Lord shed upon us all his spirit of grace and supplication !

THE PURSUIT OF HUMAN GLORY INCOMPATIBLE WITH FAITH.

"How can ye believe, who receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor which cometh from God only."—John v. 44.

Glory! how beautiful is that word! How many hearts it has caused to leap! Is there one who, in all possible cases, can hear it or utter it, without emotion! Primitive and indestructible tendency of human nature, the love of glory lives in all hearts, is found in all conditions, occupies a place in all enterprises, and may be compared to that wind, loved by mariners, without which the oar and the paddle would in vain fatigue a waveless sea.

Ask honest men, endeavor to reach the bottom of consciences more concealed, you will learn what power the presence, the expectation, the name even of glory exert over all those who are animated apparently by other motives. In the efforts of the patriot, the devotion of the hero, the perseverance of the philanthropist, the ardor of the philosopher, nay more, in the speculations of the man of business, the love of glory has almost always a place, and very often the first place.

"What!" exclaims that poor and obscure artisan, his brow all covered with the sweat of labor, "what! I pretend to glory! You may assure yourself I never cared for it." Yes, perhaps, when obliged to devote yourself entirely to the care of your subsistence, you had no thought but for the first necessities of life. Then that indestructible love of glory slept in your bosom. But the first wants appeased, how prompt it will be to awake! Do not deceive yourself. What is called glory among heroes, politicians, and men of genius, will, under another name, become one of your principal motives of action. What are the pleasures you expect from that money which your industry accumulates? Ease, do you say, security, material advantages? It may be so, but to be honest, you still count among these the pleasure of passing for a rich man, and of securing that kind of consideration which is not easily refused to wealth. This, then, is glory.

There is in every soul an imperious want, a violent desire to add to its individual life, a foreign life, if I may say so, a life beyond itself, the seat of which is in the opinions of others. To be praised, admired, or at least, esteemed, is the secret desire of every human being whom misery does not compel to degrade himself to a lower ambition, and whom a profound degradation has not rendered insensible to the opinion of his fellows. We have, indeed, already within ourselves a judge, who is very indulgent with reference to our qualities and conduct; but this judge does not suffice us. It appears that, irresistibly driven to the sentiment of our nothingness, and dreading to be compelled some day to undeceive ourselves, we feel the necessity of appealing to other men to aid our self-love, and of deriving from them an additional life, which we find not in ourselves. So true is it that this pursuit is derived from a consciousness of our weakness, that of all men, he who should seem the proudest, would be a man to whom, upon this point, his own opinion was sufficient.

Do not, then, deceive yourselves. Rich or poor, high or low, we all love glory. This craving for the esteem of others follows us as our shadow. It glides with us everywhere. Chased away under one form, it reproduces itself in another. From retreat to retreat, from corner to corner, it eagerly pursues its timid enemy, humility. Does she think she has escaped from it, she lifts up her eyes and finds it before her. The love of glory can find a place even in the tears and mortifying confessions of penitence. It secretly animates the voice of the moralist who thunders against glory; and sometimes, alas, it accompanies into the pulpit the preacher who condemns it.

We cannot deny, that, in a certain degree, the esteem of others ought to be a real want of each individual. In the first place, the privation of this esteem would divest us of a greater part of the advantages attached to the social state. What credit is to a merchant, good reputation is, in the same degree, to every member of society. In the second place, without some mutual good-will, society would not be supportable, and good-will is inseparably connected with esteem. Besides, public confidence is the first condition of the good we desire to do. To be refused this confidence, would paralyze our best intentions. It is necessary, then, to obtain and to keep it. All this explains and justifies the natural sentiment which causes us to place a good reputation in the number, and even in the first rank, of temporal blessings. Under these various relations, it has a right to the same care which we give to our health; it has a right to such care, more especially because it not only bears upon our own welfare, but upon that of our family. I go even further; I acknowledge that, in the absence of Christianity, the love of esteem is one of the best things which can be met with in fallen man. In the absence of an object worthy of our homage, it is an indirect homage to those moral ideas of which society cannot divest itself, and is the best of those social elements which keep men united. But how different from this necessary care of a temporal blessing, for which we ought to give thanks to God, as for all others, is that pursuit of glory, from which we see issuing two very clearly marked characteristics. The first, that of making the esteem of men the rule of our actions. The second, of seeking, in addition to a good reputation, praise, fame, celebrity. This is what our text condemns; the praise of men as an end of our actions, their approbation preferred to that of God, the glory which comes from men eagerly desired, the glory which comes from God neglected.

Remark particularly that my text does not only say, *ye love to receive glory from one another;* it also adds, *ye seek not the glory which cometh from God alone.* The glory, then, which comes from God only is a thing to be sought after. The following words of Jesus serve as a supplement to those which he uttered on another occasion: "There is no one who hath forsaken house, or brother, or sister, or father, or mother, or children, for my sake and the gospel's, who shall not in the present time receive an hundred fold." (Mark x. 29, 30.) In like manner, there is no one who, for the love of Jesus Christ, has renounced human glory, who shall not receive an hundred fold from Him who required the sacrifice. In the kingdom of God, then, there is no sacrifice without compensation, and the compensations of God are infinite. In our souls, there is no want he will not satisfy, but in his own way; that is to say, by giving us, instead of the gross aliment which our deluded hunger seeks, a purer aliment, which it knows not. We were born for glory. Well, he invites us to seek it. The same invitation is abundantly reproduced in the gospel. There, glory is represented as an object worthy of our pursuit, as the final recompense of our toils, as the price of the blood of Jesus Christ. The blessings of heaven are offered to those "who, by persevering in good works, seek honor, glory, and immortality."

Here, it is no longer man that praises man; it is no longer the wretched flattering the wretched; it is the human soul satisfying itself with true glory in the bosom of the God of glory. It is the Christian, expecting and obtaining from the mouth of the only witness whose regard he seeks, these noble and precious words, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will advance thee to many things." This is the glory which ought to be desired, which ought to be the end of life,—a glory we cannot dispense with without crime. It is the glory which cometh from God alone.

But as to human glory, Jesus Christ is so far from authorizing the pursuit of it, that he declares it incompatible with Christian faith. "How can ye believe," says he, "who love to receive glory one from another, and seek not the glory that cometh from God alone."

Indeed, this love of human glory is one of the principal quicksands of Christian faith. We can more easily and much sooner vanquish all other obstacles. When the soul, oppressed by the consciousness of its sins, and anxious respecting its future destiny, turns in the direction of religion, it meets, on its way, numerous enemies of its salvation. Proud reason is there objecting to the obscurity of the Christian doctrines, and urging it to reject what it cannot comprehend. Indolence dissuades it from the conquest of a kingdom, "which is taken by force, and of which only the violent take possession;" and sensuality makes it afraid of a chaste and austere life. But when all these perfidious counsellors have been successively driven away, human glory, more dangerous still, and more certain to be heard, presents itself.

If to believe were merely to recognize as true, certain facts and doctrines of the gospel; if faith were only an act of the mind, in which the heart had no part, it would doubtless be impossible to see how the desire of human glory could hinder us from believing. But to believe in Jesus Christ is another thing; it is to receive, to choose, to embrace him, with all those qualities which are ascribed to him in the gospel. It is to submit to him in our heart, our will, our life; in a word, it is to become the subject, the servant of this divine Master. But there is a disposition of soul in which, though the mind is subdued, the heart is yet undecided and rebellious. We desire to believe, and cannot; or rather we believe, and do not believe. As to conviction, indeed, we are within the exact terms of the gospel, but we are not within the gospel itself. We possess it as a treasure of which we have not the key, with which we can do nothing, and upon which we cannot live. "We have a name to live, but are dead."

I believe it important to insist on this singular state of the soul, because it is common and little noticed. There are among us, perhaps, few sceptics, properly speaking, who account to themselves for their scepticism. But there are among us many persons whose intellects believe, whose hearts doubt. Surprised themselves at the discordance which they observe between their opinions and their feelings, they seek for the cause, and cannot imagine it. If they had searched thoroughly, they would have discovered it in the illicit retention and guilty cherishing of an idol which they had not the courage to sacrifice. Ordinarily it is some unhappy bias which strikes their Christianity with paralysis and death; some forbidden thing, obstinately kept in their tent, which has caused the curse to rest upon it. This is the secret of so many half-conversions, of so much defective Christianity. This explains the character of those men who, according to the remarkable expression of the apostle, "are ever learning, but never coming to the knowledge of the truth." It is said that when a mighty ship is on the point of being launched into the sea, when all is ready, when the last blow of the axe has caused the last support to fall, the spectators are often surprised to see the noble vessel remain immovable on its smooth base; the curious eye seeks everywhere for the mysterious cause of this immobility; and in a short time a mere pebble is discovered under its keel, which resists the whole force of that colossal ship. Do you, then, from whom the secret of your delay and irresolution on the way to truth has been concealed, search well, and in some unseen recess of the soul, you will perceive some favorite inclination, some inveterate habit, some passion ashamed to show itself, which, in its obscure retreat, opposes the generous launch which bears you towards the Saviour.

Let us apply this general observation to human glory, and set forth a truth, which presents itself in the very commencement of the subject. The moral law is a law of perfection; this every one will admit without difficulty. But in order that the pursuit of glory should not prevent us from keeping this law, it is necessary that the being from whom we expect glory, should be perfect in disposition, principle and action. If he is not, he will not require from us perfection in return for his approbation, or as a pledge of it; for you may be sure he will not put his admiration and praise at a price so high. But more than this, he will with difficulty permit himself to be surpassed. Perfection, nay, the very tendency to perfection, will offend his jealous eyes. He will deny the necessity of this tendency, or rather he will deny the reality of it in your heart; he will misrepresent your intentions; he will call good evil, and candor hypocrisy. What I say upon this point, I do not say of this or that individual, or of any one in particular; for it would be absurd to pretend that no man would consent to find his superior in another; admiration and enthusiasm are tacitly involved in the confession of inferiority. I speak of the world in general, of its tendencies and its maxims. I compare its morality with that of the law of perfection; and I see that it is separated from it by an abyss. I recognize that in all times the tendency to perfection has cost those who have frankly avowed it, either repose or fortune, honor, or even life. Whence I conclude that he who desires the glory which comes from the world, must descend to the standard of the world, by espousing its maxims, or at least taking care not to profess, I do not say opposite, but only loftier maxims. That we may leave nothing equivocal in this subject, let us reply to those, who cite the universal enthusiasm excited by generous actions, and the spontaneous acclamations which greet the appearance of a great character, that there is nothing in such facts which contradicts what we have advanced. That man has not lost the power of admiring moral beauty; that the poetry of virtue has a charm to him; that such bright flashes dazzle him; that even in the person of an adversary or an enemy, certain traits of veracity, fidelity, self-sacrifice and mercy, irresistibly seize upon his heart,—who could or would deny? But I have spoken of the law; of the law which embraces all these virtues, but which includes them under the notion of obedience; of the law, which is to all such occasional manifestations what the light is to the lightning; of the law fulfilled, but not absorbed by love; of the law or system according to which man does not rise alone, choose his own virtues, consult his own nature, take his own impressions for a guide or seek his own glory; of a law in which he subordinates himself to rule, loses sight of himself before the rule, and retains, in the freedom of love, all the submission of fear, and in an intelligent fidelity, all the scrupulousness of blind obedience. Perfection is here, and nowhere else. It would not even be found in the practice of all the virtues, if these virtues were not united in one bundle by the tie of obedience. But is this the law of the world? Has the world received it? Can the world endure it? And if it is not in its nature either to receive or endure it, does it reserve its suffrages and its applause for those who have made it their law? And the question is not, whether in the depths of the human conscience, this perfect virtue may not, in its principles, receive a silent homage; whether many persons do not internally, and so to speak, unconsciously decree the first rank to that virtue which they know not how to obey, but ever wish to obey. This I believe; but whence comes the applause of the world? For whom does it prepare crowns? For whom does it raise thrones? And. to present the same question in another form; if one who obeys the perfect law obtains its homage, on what ground does he obtain it? To what part of his being and his life is it addressed? Is it not to that which may be insulated and detached from the fundamental principle of his conduct? Is it not the natural man that they admire in him? Has the supernatural man, the new man, the man of God and of the law, any share in that homage? You know as well as I; you perceive without difficulty, that here the exception confirms the rule; and you will conclude with me, that to secure the glory which comes from men, he must lend himself to their maxims, and proportion himself to their measure; that he must not surpass, that is, *humble* those, from whom he expects glory; and, on the other hand, in order to be perfect, that he must seek the regard, and be ambitious of the approbation, of a perfect being.

Let us now descend from these general ideas to application and details.

How can the soul, which prefers the glory which comes from men to that which comes from God only, believe in Jesus with a real and efficacious faith? He has been compelled to acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God; but the world refuses him that august title. Since the appearance of that divine Prince of humanity, the world has heaped opprobrium upon the adorers of Jesus. An external and formal adherence to him has been permitted in consideration of circumstances;

but earnest and efficient faith has generally been exposed to derision. Is it, then, easy for him who values the opinion of men, to confess that divine Saviour, still spit upon and scourged as in the Prætorium, still crucified as in Golgotha? And must he not, in order to lie prostrate at his feet, have bid adieu forever to the esteem and approbation of that crowd which reject him?

"He that says he believes in Jesus Christ, ought to live even as Jesus Christ lived." But how did he live? In a manner so different from received opinions, that it may be said that his religion is quite opposed to that of the world. For the world has its religion, wherein all the passions of the flesh are elevated into divinities. Here is pride; but we are to follow the steps of him who was meek and lowly in heart: here is sensuality; but we are to conform our spirit to his who had not where to lay his head: here is independence; yet we are to resemble him who came into the world to serve, not to be served: here is selfishness, yet we are to be clothed with the dispositions of him who gave his life for his friends. In a word, we must embrace a life, some of whose virtues please the world, because they are of use to it, but the general character of which wounds and condemns it. How can all this be done by him who cleaves to the approbation of the world?

How, for example, shall he use his Christian liberty, who is afraid that this liberty may pass for presumption and arrogance? How shall he conform his life and his manners to evangelical simplicity, who dreads to hear himself taxed with parsimony and meanness? How shall he persevere in the exercise of Christian devotion, who dreads to see falling upon his family and upon himself, some of those insulting epithets which ignorance and envy pour upon piety? A thousand considerations of this kind form themselves around him like a net, which binds and imprisons him. At every step he wishes to take, he is held back by some new fear; vexed, he surveys from the place he dares not quit, the course he ought to pursue; amidst a thousand emotions unceasingly repressed, and of repentings which exhaust the soul, he arrives at the tomb without ever having known the joyous liberty of faith.

And even if we did not risk a departure from the path of virtue, while following the attraction of human glory, such a pursuit would not be less incompatible with the spirit of the gospel. In fact there is, according to the gospel, but one rule of our conduct, the will of God; one glory to seek, the glory that comes from God. But suppose we prefer to that glory the glory that comes from men, and content ourselves with making common cause with them; we invade the eternal rights of God, so firmly established in the gospel. by impiously erecting the tribunal of man at the side of, and even above, the tribunal of God.

The God of the gospel, my brethren, is a jealous God; he is a God who will suffer no division, either in adoration or obedience. To seek our law anywhere but in him, is to renounce our Lawgiver; to seek glory anywhere else is to renounce our Judge. And surely he must hold himself honored by the rivals we give him! Worms of the earth, creatures of a day, poor sinners, equalled in our esteem, mingled in our homage with the eternal Jehovah, King of immensity, Sovereign of hearts, adorable Source of all holiness! The fickle judgment of a feeble intelligence preferred to the infallible judgment of the God of truth! Glory asked of shame, shame cast upon glory! For there is not even equality here; the creature is not equalized to the Creator; it is placed above him. From the very moment that the comparison is conceived, the outrage is consummated, the Creator is degraded below the creature; because in such an approximation, to hesitate is already to choose.

And who could imagine to what glory we immolate the rights of our Creator! If it were a splendid example, if it were the suffrages of all people, and of every age, we should not be less culpable; yet such a thing might be conceived. But we do not seek so high for pretexts to insult God. On the contrary, we descend exceedingly low, to the very dust, to solicit praise. It is to the false tongue of a neighbor, to the smiling flattery of a wit, to the condescension of some earthly grandee, to the fear of ridicule, to the false customs of society, to some transitory fashion, to the pleasure of making a little stir in the circle of our acquaintances, that we wantonly abandon the dignity of the government of God, and the honor of his name. Behold the glory of man which we prefer to the glory of God! Certainly, my brethren, it would be difficut to enlarge upon this subject, without a profound contempt of ourselves.

Conclude, then, that the pursuit of human glory, by hindering us from believing in Jesus Christ, or what is the same thing, from applying that faith, is incompatible with Christianity.

There is only one kind of approbation which can be sought without danger; in heaven, that of God, on earth, that of the saints. And we must not seek even the latter, except as a manifestation of the divine approbation. In general, the reproofs of the just are of more value than their praises. Let us not forget those beautiful words of David, "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a favor; let him reprove me, it shall be to me an excellent balm." (Ps. cxli. 5.) He has not spoken thus of the praises of the righteous.

And let none oppose to us such passages as the following, "Whatsoever things are of good report, think of." (Phil. iv. 8.) "Be careful to do that which is good, not only before the Lord, but before men." (2 Cor. viii. 21.) These passages, the true meaning of which is established by the general spirit of the gospel, are authoritatively explained in those precious words of the Master, "Let your light so shine before men, that others, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father in heaven." Here, not the creature, but the Creator is to be glorified. And the esteem of men is presented to the Christian, not as his aim, nor even as his encouragement. Let all the glory return to God, and then let him "give us of his own." Let God glorify us, if he deems it best. Such, upon this matter, is the sentiment of the true Christian. Our doctrine, then, remains entire. The pursuit of human glory is incompatible with the profession of the Christian. He ought to be ambitious only of the glory that comes from God.

Brethren, if our object were not to induce you to conform to a precept, and to follow a counsel, but to acknowledge a truth, you have already heard enough. You do not need arguments to convince you that the approbation of God is alone worthy of being sought. For this purpose, you have only, in thought, to pass the limits of time, and transport yourselves to the last day, and the tribunal of God. There you will see the value of human opinion. The glory of the world, formerly so dazzling in your eyes, will appear to you like one of those deceitful fires which rise from the marshes, and owe their pale rays only to the thick darkness of the night. That renown which, it is said, ought to pass through an ages, and levy a perpetual tribute of admiration from posterity, will appear to you no more than the puerile chimera of a vain-glorious delirium. The infinite value you have attached to the opinion of your companions in trial, will appear to you an inexpressibly ridiculous blunder. Your immortal glory, as you are pleased to call the celebrity of a day, will be dissipated and absorbed in a glory truly immortal, the glory of God and of saints. You will there feel,—God forbid that it should be with bitter regret,—that these simple words of your heavenly Father, "Well done, good servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things," will dim the lustre of those pompous terms with which you have filled your panegyrics, wherein you have audaciously stolen the titles of the Creator to decorate a creature. "Well done, good servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things!" Who on earth contents himself with such a slight praise? But in heaven, and from the mouth of Jehovah, such praise is of immense value; and never did adulation the most extravagant, enthusiasm the most intoxicating, fill him, who was the object of it, with a transport comparable to that with which these simple words can fill the glorified believer.

This, my brethren, is what you may say to yourselves. You may further say, that even on earth, the triumphs of self-love are vain and miserable; that they do not fill the heart; that they can only deepen more and more the immense and devouring void; that the first effect of a triumph is to produce the desire for another; that changes of opinion are excessive and cruel; and that he is a fool who places his happiness at the mercy of that fickle and inconsistent opinion. You will say to yourselves that, when the craving for esteem and applause seizes upon a soul, it permits nothing good to subsist along with it; that there is no longer room for love in a heart which glory fills; that nothing withers the soul like this dangerous passion; and that it steals from us the purest pleasures and the noblest emotions of which the soul is susceptible.

I repeat it, then, that, if to be conformed to truth it were only necessary to know it, you might rely upon yourselves for the success of this discourse. But experience has proved to you the contrary. There are a thousand truths that have subdued your intellect, without controlling your life. Know, then, that this work is not yours, and that you will never save yourselves. Ah! you feel it, perhaps. To renounce the esteem of the world, to cease making it an end and a rule, and to seek only the approbation of God, is a miracle which belongs only to God to work in you, and which it is your privilege to ask of him. May you, then, may we all, ask it of him, with sincerity, earnestness, and perseverance. May we see forming in our hearts a holy tranquillity, with reference to the judgments of men. Freed from the heavy chains of opinion, may we feel ourselves free to believe, to love, to obey, till the day comes, when, delivered forever from that importunate vision of human glory, we shall rejoice in the rays of a true glory, in the bosom of our God and of his Christ.

POWER OF THE FEEBLE.*

> "There are many members, but only one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, those members which seem to be the feeblest, are the most necessary."—1 Cor. xii. 20–22.

"The kingdom of heaven cometh not with observation." It was by these words, and many others like them, that Jesus Christ turned the attention of the Jews, from their accustomed prospect of glory, splendor, and power, to that of the gospel, composed as it is of far different aspects. But the friend of the simple and the meek, the God of the poor in spirit, the Prince of the little and the feeble, could not make himself understood by a multitude of carnal Israelites, carried away by false greatness. The same thing happens in our days; his humility conceals him from our proud hearts. We voluntarily make a selection in his gospel, leaving to him the lowliness he has chosen, and taking to ourselves the loftiness he has disdained. And here I do not speak only of external pomp, of which it is easy to see the nothingness, but of the splendor of certain spiritual gifts which distinguish a Christian, without the aid of external circumstances, and may appear to us worthy of our ambition. But it is not ambition, whatever fine name it may assume, which is favored by the gospel; and we find the proof of this, in the passage in which St. Paul contrasts the various gifts which the Spirit of God had just shed upon the church, "There are many members, but only one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, those members of the body which appear the feeblest, are the most necessary."

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* Preached on the anniversary of the day of Pentecost.

The day of Pentecost was, even to the carnal eye, a very great day. The mighty rushing wind, the tongues of fire, the miraculous gifts suddenly distributed among the apostles, and that extraordinary energy which made them new men, were doubtless all wonderful. Nevertheless, the festival of the Holy Spirit includes still greater things; and the gospel, which to-day recounts to us the effusion of these splendid gifts, authorizes us, by the voice of St. Paul, to proclaim the superiority of some other gifts more obscure and inconsiderable in appearance, of which the Holy Spirit is equally the author. This is what we propose to do, to-day, while explaining these closing words of the apostle, "the members of the body which appear the feeblest, are yet the most necessary."

The Greek word rendered *feeble*, in our versions of the Bible, does not, in this place, signify feebleness, properly speaking, but *inferiority*. The more feeble members, are those less remarkable, or less distinguished. Besides, if the same word is used to designate two different ideas, it is because they have some relation to each other, at least in the vulgar opinion. It is so common, when one possesses power, to exhibit it, and even to make a parade of it, that a life, obscure, concealed, modest, almost always suggests the idea of timidity and feebleness. If this opinion is often well founded in the world, it is not so in the church; and it is the church which is referred to in my text. This body is the church, these members are the members of the church, and the more feeble are those who have received the less splendid and apparently less elevated gifts of the Holy Spirit. Such are the feeble members which Paul represents as the most necessary. But as the apostle has spoken, in the whole chapter, of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, since it is with reference to these, that he distinguishes the members of the church as strong and feeble, we believe that we may present the idea of the apostle in this form. The gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are the most feeble, are also the most necessary.

The gifts of the first rank, I mean the more splendid gifts, are of two kinds. Those that are supernatural, such as speaking in unknown tongues, curing diseases, predicting the future; secondly, those that are natural, some of which relate to the heart, such as triumphant joy, a faith changed, as it were, to sight, a kind of anticipation of the privileges of the celestial city; while others relate to the intellect, as the gift of teaching and convincing, a persuasive eloquence, profound knowledge of the Scriptures, and generally all those talents which can be applied to the service of religion. Such are the gifts of the first order; but, in the present day, we cannot accurately distinguish, in such an enumeration, those natural talents of the mind from those peculiar sentiments which grace has produced in a Christian soul.

In the train of these gifts, to speak after the manner of the apostle, come the gifts that are more feeble.

These are humility, by which a believer abases himself before God, and regards others as more excellent than himself; fidelity which will not be unjust in the smallest, any more than in the greatest things; purity of manners and of thought, which keeps undefiled the temple where the Holy Spirit deigns to dwell; truth which would not, for the greatest bribe, open its lips to the slightest falsehood; contentment, which bears all losses without a murmur, because its real treasure cannot be taken from it; activity, which remembers that the kingdom of God consists not in words, but in deeds; charity, in fine, but not charity factitious, borrowed, learnt by heart, but a true love, a tenderness of soul, which alternately pities and consoles, soothes and beseeches; which cannot revile or despise; which bears all things, excuses all things; which rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth.

Would you not, my brethren, regard him as supremely happy who had received from the goodness of God all these gifts united? Well, one may possess them all, without making any noise in the world. A multitude of persons may have this assemblage of gifts truly divine, without being remarked, without being suspected. And in what caverns, you will ask me, in what deserts are these excellent persons concealed? In what deserts? In your cities, in your villages, in the midst of yourselves, to whom they hold relations of business and of friendship; in the world, where they have, so to speak, a profession, a post of duties. If you cannot discover them, look to yourselves! You have the eye of flesh that sees their bodies, the eye of self-love which sees defects; you have not the spiritual eye which seeks complacently in every soul, not vices and imperfections, but the glorious and delightful traces of the presence of the divine Spirit. And how otherwise could you perceive such persons? They have neither the vanity which pushes itself forward, nor the talent which, willing, or unwilling, compels belief. Let me speak plainly upon this point. Persons advanced in spiritual attainments often deceive themselves. Involuntarily they seek splendor and power; and nothing, in the sphere to which they belong, reveals to them either the one or the other. That faithful soul I have described to you, cannot perhaps give an account of his thoughts; he is scarcely conscious of his state; he has the appearance of seeking long after that which he has found; he appears behind those whom he really precedes. His faith is not always a well-connected system; it has many deficiencies, many apparent inconsistencies; faithful in principle, he errs sometimes in form. That very joy which seems inseparable from Christianity, does not appear very perceptible either in his aspect or in his discourse. That enthusiasm which kindles on the countenance of some, is foreign to his character, frightens perhaps his timid humility. In a word, his life is one "hid with God," which God only knows, and which God only appreciates.

But these obscure gifts are the ones which Paul exalts in my text, and proclaims as the most necessary. This is true, in the first place, with reference to the individual who possesses them. What is the great point at issue for him? What is his supreme interest? It is the re-establishment in him of the divine image; it is regeneration; for regeneration is salvation. Well, that regeneration consists entirely in the obscure or feeble gifts of which we have spoken. The other gifts which

God may confer upon a soul are, to speak justly, divine favors, by which he would make known his munificence; they are the splendors which he scatters here and there, as he judges necessary, special privileges, which serve to indicate, even on earth, to what glory a regenerated soul may attain in heaven. But it is not on this condition alone that he is regenerated and saved. Nor is there all the difference which might be thought between the more splendid and the more obscure gifts. When the sun sheds his beneficent rays upon our globe, he penetrates at once into palaces and cottages; but in palaces his beams are reflected from crystal and gold; in cottages, they fall upon tarnished surfaces which give back no reflection;—no matter, in the cottage as well as in the palace, he diffuses heat and life. In the humble retreat of the poor, as well as in the mansion of royalty, what has penetrated is equally the star of day, the king of the heavens, and the soul of nature. So, also, in the case of the obscure Christian, it is truly the Holy Spirit that dwells within him. If that Spirit does not reveal himself there with as much splendor, he dwells with no less entireness, and with all his essential characteristics. That which distinguishes a Christian is not precisely enthusiasm and ardor, still less talent and eloquence; but humble faith, the faith which knows how to wait, humility, and especially love. With these gifts, he has passed from death to life: what needs he more?

More? Ah! God has doubtless shown his wisdom in rarely according more. Danger is attached to all elevation, from which spiritual elevation is not expected. Internal gifts are those particularly, which, incorporated with our being, appear to form a part of ourselves.

We too easily forget that we possess them by grace, and that it is absurd to glorify ourselves on account of what we have received. Pride, which ferments secretly in the recesses of our soul, takes occasion to gain entire possession of it. Hence burning fervors and extraordinary talents have often been seen opening a passage to spiritual pride, which, like all other pride, goes before destruction. This danger is so real and so great, that our Lord frequently takes occasion to bring some internal humiliation upon those whom, without this, their privileges would elevate too high. St. Paul, without explaining himself further, tells us "of a thorn in the flesh," which doubtless reminded him of his former misery, and preserved him from being elated with pride. And to how many distinguished Christians has God shown himself on purpose sparing of some grace, the possession of which would have made their glory too complete, and their position too perilous? How many Christians have found, in the necessity of struggling with some obstinate bias, or in the presence of some irresistible doubt, a counterpoise to that presumption which naturally springs from the consciousness of power! By which we may judge how wise is that precept of the great apostle, "Seek not high things, but walk with the humble."

These obscure and feeble gifts are also the most necessary to the church. All the graces of God, splendid or obscure, have benefited the church; but God having multiplied feeble Christians, and distributed more sparingly those that are strong, has by this sufficiently indicated the importance he attaches to the former. If, in the primitive church, he granted extraordinary gifts to believers generally, it was only in a certain measure, and for a time. In general, he has appeared disposed to humble power, reserving triumphs for weakness. "He has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and feeble things to confound the strong, things vile and despised, yea, things that are not to bring to naught things that are." He has brought into competition riches and poverty, wisdom and ignorance, philosophy and rusticity: but poverty, rusticity, and ignorance have conquered. From time to time he has called to his aid genius and power, and permitted them to co-operate in his work; but when he has so willed it, the sling of the young son of Jesse has sufficed to overthrow Goliath. The smallness of the means has only served to enhance the power of him who employed them. In all time, the church has been sufficient to the church, truth has been sufficient to truth. Eloquence and enthusiasm have not done so much for this sacred cause as the modest virtues, the uniform activity, and the patient prayers of thousands of believers whose names are unknown.

The consideration of the great movements which have been accomplished in the bosom of the church, have led some persons to a different judgment. A Paul, an Augustine, and a Luther were certainly not feeble members of the church. Such men, or rather such powers, have been ordained of God, in the course of time, to prepare the soil of the church for a glorious harvest, to open to the Christian life a favorable and more extensive sphere. And God forbid that we should fail to recognize the importance of these grand manifestations! But the reign of God on earth is nothing else than his reign in each of the souls which compose the church. And if the prosperity of the church has for its measure the number and reality of individual conversions, if God is more honored in the profound emotions of souls subdued by grace, than by the public and solemn proclamation of the doctrines of revealed religion, let us acknowledge as a truth, that the feeble members of the church contribute much more, proportionally, to the reign of God, than the powerful members of whom we have spoken.

As to the latter, it seems to us that admiration very generally excuses us from imitation. Appearing at intervals, such men do not come into contact with us all. In this respect, their writings and their memory but imperfectly replace their life ; for it is by feeble things, by ordinary and familiar details, that they could make upon us a deep impression. Life alone could have acted upon life. But isolated from us by circumstances, by their very greatness, by their fame, they can exert upon us only an indirect and general influence, doubtless favorable and salutary, but going no further than simply disposing us to observe and study the feeble members of that flock, of which we must form a part in order to be the children of God. These latter models appear more within our reach, although their gifts may not be in reality either less precious or less divine than those of the first class of Christians. We feel that nothing can excuse us from their possession ; that nothing can supply their place ; that while we may be neither wise, nor eloquent, nor rapt by religious ecstacy, to the third heavens, we must be holy ; that this is the natural vocation of every soul, and the design of God respecting us all. This holiness, proportioned to our measure, and adapted to a sphere of activity which does not transcend our own, attracts us by its simplicity, while it strikes us by its beauty. Mysterious in its origin, wonderful in its nature, nay, miraculous, if we consider the changes it produces, but not the less human, attainable, and practicable, it is the prose of the kingdom of heaven, which each is bound to speak. Yes, these lives, habitually imbued with the spirit of Christianity, of a single and even tenor, of a strict consistency, of a solemn unity, of a sweet serenity, of an indefatigable and tranquil activity, of a zeal which does much, and says little,—lives, whose Christian character appears as much more incontestable as enthusiasm takes a place inferior to that of charity, are what accomplish the most for the cause of Christ. These constitute the salutary contagion which is perpetually acting in the church, which has kept, through the most disastrous times, so many hearts for the Lord, and, in more favored epochs, multiplied them abundantly.

These observations sufficiently prove that sincere and humble piety is the greatest of forces, and that the more feeble members of the church are the most necessary to its establishment and its conquests. It is not more difficult to prove that these are the members which are the most necessary to civil society. This is to add the last feature of their character; for we ought not to lose sight of the fact, that the Christian is a citizen, and that everything he has received from above, has been given him to be used in society. We have distinguished two kinds of striking superiority, the one relating to the heart, the other to the intellect. As to the first, it has sometimes produced very great effects, but rather in the bosom of the church itself, and in our spiritual relations, than in the relations of ordinary life. As to the second, which consists in mental gifts, it is beneficial only when it is animated and sanctified by the spirit of piety. But what is necessary to society is this very piety. The domain of piety is not confined within the circle of its meditations, to the inner life, and religious worship; piety is profitable for all things, is applicable to all things. But we go further, and say, piety is the only principle of the life of states, and the only remedy of diseased society. Behold, with all its array of human virtues and brilliant talents, what an aspect society presents. Raise yourselves a little higher than the limited circle of your domestic relations, though you may find even in these relations, in one way or another, the proof of what I advance; contemplate that vast horizon of society, listen to that frightful tumult of all the passions unchained, plunge into the heart, and into the remotest recesses of that gloomy labyrinth; in a word, for a few moments contemplate the world. Of course, you have not the scrutinizing glance of Him who searcheth the heart and the reins; you cannot go to the bottom of that revolting sink of iniquity, which lies concealed in the heart!.....My brethren, we cannot see the glory of God till we die; can we then, without dying, contemplate human iniquity? But you have seen the surface; that is enough. Judge now, if the finest talents are capable of establishing harmony in that chaos, peace in that tumult. Judge, also, if the presence of a small number of men, full of Christian joy and enthusiastic fervor, and for that very reason, unintelligible to the mass, could exert over it a sensible influence. O the true leaven in that mass is the humble, tranquil, obscure, active virtue of the thousands of the faithful, diffused through all the recesses of society, struggling by their example and their prayers against the general depravity, and causing their light to shine before men so sweetly, as, at least, to attract some souls. It is such, that the Lord has cast as seed into the world, a grain of which will produce, in some twenty, in others thirty, and in others a hundred fold. These are the first fruits of that great harvest, which is ripening in the field of the world, and which, we have the assurance, will one day cover with its fruits the entire face of the earth.

That day is not yet come; and the circumstances which are to bring it develop themselves slowly. Everything in the world moves more rapidly than the progress of that kingdom of love and peace. What improvements are to be made before man will deign to care for the improvement of his soul! Is it not strange, to see him making sure of everything except his salvation; restoring everything except his conscience; speculating on everything except eternity? Admirable age, to which nothing is wanting, but the one thing needful! Political society is settling itself on new foundations, the rights of man are secured, and therein I rejoice; but in the midst of this development of arts and opulence, I seek for the Holy Spirit, that spirit of moderation, of disinterestedness, and of purity,—where is it? Science, literature, public instruction extend their domain; culture diffuses itself into all the places, and amid all the conditions from which it was banished; intelligence is everywhere honored, and therein I certainly rejoice; but amid these triumphs of human thought, I seek for the Holy Spirit, the spirit of humility, of piety, and of charity;—where is it? Ah, my brethren, it is still necessary that this divine Consoler should console all, that this power should subdue all, that this life should animate all. Strive by prayer for the advent of that glorious day; contend for Jesus Christ, who has contended for you; supplicate with fervor that his kingdom may come; pray that "at his name every knee may bow, and every tongue confess, that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Ask not for the extraordinary gifts which he shed upon the apostles in their day, but pray that the Holy Spirit of God may multiply among you the number of those feeble members, that is, of those humble and faithful Christians, who are the power and hope of the church. Let all of us together ask it from the Father of lights; and beseech him to add to the church, even on this day, some souls that may be saved.

THE INTOLERANCE OF THE GOSPEL.

"He that is not with me is against me."—Matt. xii. 30.

These words were uttered by Jesus Christ, after the performance of one of his most splendid miracles. The Pharisees pretending that he had performed it by the power of the devil, Jesus Christ showed them that it was absurd to suppose that the devil would aid in the establishment of a religion altogether opposed to his interests. Is Satan, said he, divided against himself? Then, rejecting such an idea, our Saviour added, that if Satan was not his accomplice, as the Pharisees supposed, it followed that he was his adversary. And why? Because, with reference to Jesus Christ, it is absolutely necessary to be one thing or another. Every one who is not with him, is, for the same reason, against him.

Thus Jesus Christ took occasion from a particular fact, to proclaim a great truth, one which is doubtless found diffused through the whole gospel, and results from the general spirit of the Christian system, but which had not yet received an expression so precise and solemn. It is this declaration of our Lord that will occupy our attention to-day. Our design is to develop the evidences of its truth; but it is necessary, first of all, to explain its principal terms.

Who is the man that is *against* Jesus Christ? It must be sufficiently obvious to all, that by this expression, our Saviour designs every man to whom the gospel is an object of aversion and hatred, whether he conceal his sentiments in his heart, or manifest them in his words and actions. Who, then, is the man that is not *with* or *for* Jesus Christ? We do not need to collect the features of such an one, by means of our imagination. The world is full of persons who are not for Jesus Christ. We recognize them in all those members of the Christian church who belong to it only by birth, and by certain external usages, but whose whole life proves that the church inspires them with no interest. They have accepted a religion as one accepts a country, not by free choice, but by necessity. Christians by birth, they are not such by affection. Having examined neither the proofs which establish the truth of Christianity, nor the objections by which it is assailed, they believe on the faith of others. They have some general notions of the doctrines of revelation, and have admitted them once for all, without ever thinking of them again. In a word, religion is to them a matter of high propriety, an interesting fact, a social necessity, but nothing more. It is neither the rule of their life, nor one of their interests. They aid neither by their prayers, nor their efforts, in the advancement of the kingdom of God. They do not inform themselves whether it advances or recedes. Everything has more importance to them than the success of that great cause. Such are the principal features of the characters of the indifferent.

Now what says the Saviour with reference to these men? "They that are not for me are against me."

We do not know a better way of establishing the truth of this, than by showing the falseness of the contrary proposition, namely, " One may not be for Jesus, and yet not be against him ; he may be neither his friend nor his enemy ; he may observe, with respect to him, a species of neutrality." Let us see if such neutrality is possible.

I observe, in the first place, that a real neutrality is one of the rarest things in the world. Man is not made for indifference ; undoubtedly he may feel neither love nor hatred for things which are completely foreign to him, and to which no circumstance directs his attention. But whatever affects him nearly, everything which exerts an influence upon his fortune, nay more, everything which he sees exciting general interest, becomes to him an object of some kind of sentiment. His tastes may change, but like a pendulum, he oscillates perpetually from affection to aversion, and from aversion to affection, without ever stopping in the intermediate space. His soul being made for feeling, and feeling being his life, he is, so to speak, constrained to love or hate, and to flee from indifference as a kind of death. Each of us, by reflecting upon himself and consulting his recollections, will recognize this disposition without difficulty. This fact, then, will be sufficient to put us on our guard against the notion, that we may *not* be *for* Jesus Christ, and yet not be *against* him.

But if the observation we have just made be true in general, it is especially so in the domain of religion. A religion is an opinion and a system ; but what distinguishes it from all opinions and systems is, that it professes to be the work of God, and "all in all" to man. Any religion which should lay claim to less would belie itself, and be unworthy of the name of religion. If a religion is true, it follows that we ought to love it with all our heart; if false, to detest it with all our heart; for the question turns upon a matter of the highest excellence, or a criminal imposture; a work of God, or a work of the devil; a thing adapted to destroy, or to save our souls. Is neutrality, in such a case, possible? Can we remain, without any sentiment, in the presence of a fact, overpowering, absorbing, which unceasingly solicits a decision? Is it not here that indifference must find its limit?

But I go further, and say, if we had even remained indifferent, we would not the less have made, without willing it, a choice. Because true religion, meriting nothing less than our whole love, not to devote ourselves to it is to be against it; and a false religion, not deserving anything but our deepest hatred, not to oppose it is to be for it. Here, any middle course is impossible. The indifferent person will hear false religion on the one side say to him, Since you are not against me, you are for me; and on the other side, true religion cry to him, Since you are not for me, you are against me.

And to make this last truth more evident, suppose that God manifest in the flesh has descended to the earth, in the person of a being resembling you; that the character of that being is the ideal of perfection; his work, the salvation of the human race; his precepts, holiness itself; his feelings in reference to you, a boundless compassion. You acknowledge in him all these attributes, and you say to him, Since thou art the ideal of perfection, the rule of holiness, God himself manifest in the flesh; since thou hast shed thy blood upon the cross for the salvation of my soul, I cannot be against thee, but I will not be for thee. And for whom, then, great God, for whom, then, is that heart! for it is necessary to be for some one; the heart must attach itself to something; it does not live but as it loves. For whom, then, will you be, if not for God? Probably for yourselves, I suppose. But what is that *you*, separated from God, except the flesh in all its corruption, and sin in all its deformity? And if a man is *for* such things, is he not *against* God? If he is for his own depraved will, is he not against God? If he is for a demon, is he not against God? No, my brethren, there are in the world only two empires, which I need not name; but I affirm that he who is not in the one, is necessarily in the other; that he who is not with Jesus Christ, is against Jesus Christ. Behold the neutrality of the indifferent!

The better to appreciate this neutrality, let us enter the heart of the indifferent, and give account of the feelings which reign there. He says he has no hatred. Let us pass it over. This hatred we shall soon meet again. But are there in his heart love and obedience; love especially for Jesus Christ? Assuredly not, seeing he is not for Jesus Christ. Well, to refuse love to Jesus Christ, I affirm, is to do him all the evil which an open enemy could, or, at least, would do. If Jesus Christ had come into the world, as a king into a revolted province, in order to extinguish rebellion, and cause the silence of terror to reign in it, he might be satisfied with a trembling submission, and care nothing for the evil we do him. But such a submission he did not desire, nor can desire. That alone which he desired, that alone for which he descended to the earth, the end to which he directed all his toils, was the conquest of our heart. Separate from that triumph, every other is nothing to him. If, then, instead of our hearts which he demands, we contemptuously offer him a passive submission which he does not ask; if, in the place of that devout gratitude which he has merited by his blood, we propose, as a matter of favor, to spare him our insults, would not this of itself be the cruelest of insults, the only one, indeed, to which he could be sensible? For what is our hatred in his eyes but the more clear and frank expression of the divorce which exists between him and us; a somewhat more distinct form given to the outrage which our ingratitude constantly presents before his eyes? But perhaps you consider it a more serious thing to attack and oppose him. Indeed, you are mistaken! For what could your miserable attacks add to the crime of your ingratitude? Ah! since you have the misfortune not to love him, attack, combat, make war upon him, as you please. The Almighty will do well to be moved by the rebellion of an insect! Agitate yourselves, then; struggle in your dust; raise an entire world, if you can, against the King of worlds; you will not retard for a single instant, nor drive back a hair's breadth the progress of the eternal counsels; not that Jehovah will notice your ridiculous efforts because he sees all things; but because he has seen, before all, that you do not love him, a fact which ranks you with his enemies.

We have spoken of love, and what shall we say of obedience? Is there obedience in the indifferent? No, doubtless; for he who loves not, obeys not. It is true that a servile fear may fulfil some external duties, and produce a formal obedience; but the gospel requires a spiritual obedience, which is not possible without love. To subdue his passions, to use the world as not abusing it, to live in all humility and charity, to consecrate all his powers to the advancement of the kingdom of God, is what the indifferent will not do, what he cannot do; he lives, then, in disobedience. But I ask you, how would that man be regarded in a state, who would not obey its laws? Certainly as an enemy; even if he had never taken up arms against it. Is not a rebellious subject an enemy? How, then, shall he be considered, who cares no more for the spiritual laws of Jesus Christ, than if Jesus Christ had never given them? Certainly as an enemy. Whence it follows that he who is not for Jesus Christ is, for the same reason, against him.

But, we will not content ourselves with having shown that in principle the indifferent is a real enemy of Jesus Christ. We will show you further that, when circumstances will it, he becomes an enemy positively, and *in fact.* What, in reality, is this indifference, but a secret aversion to Christ and his doctrine, as we have already seen, a discord between the soul and Jesus, a slumbering enmity? As long as it is not excited by circumstances, it remains asleep, it has no consciousness of itself, it does not feel that it hates; and in some persons, it remains in this form, the most dangerous perhaps, all their life long. But in many others, unforeseen circumstances awaken it, and cause it to appear in its real character. Sometimes it is a clearer view of the truth by which it is awakened. That truth from which they turned away their eyes, by-and-by strikes them with unexpected vividness; they see at once that the gospel is a serious reality, and that they are about to accept or reject it. They call up the whole period during which they have sinned without reflection; they feel, above all, that they have a heart which cannot relish the strict maxims and spiritual savor of the gospel, and perceive the moment they treat it seriously, they must change their whole life. Then its renunciations, privations, sacrifices, present themselves in a crowd; indignation penetrates their soul; but instead of directing it against themselves, whose conduct condemns the law, they direct it against the law which condemns their conduct. Thenceforward they can never speak of neutrality or indifference; the veil is torn away, the wound is made, the hatred is aroused. Ever after they are directly against Jesus Christ.

Sometimes, also, the transition of enmity to its true form has been occasioned by the religious revival of those around them. Persons have found themselves in the situations we have just described; the truth has pierced them with an unexpected wound; but after a moment of indecision, their indignation, which knew not what to fasten upon, has turned against themselves. In the necessity of hating either themselves, or the gospel, they have preferred to hate themselves. And from hatred of themselves, they have naturally passed to the love of Jesus Christ. Then regenerated by the Spirit from on high, they have lived a new life; and notwithstanding their humility and reserve, there is so much difference even externally, in living for the world, and living for God, that the change has struck their neighbors. Their life has become a living gospel. The indifferent and neutral have then read the gospel, not in dead characters upon inanimate leaves, but in living letters in the hearts of men. This has formed, if I may so express myself, a new edition of the word of God, with the commentary of the Holy Spirit. Then the same struggle has been produced in the hearts of the indifferent we have already described, the evidence of the gospel, the divinity of Christ, and the infinite solemnity of life, have burst upon their vision, and overwhelmed their soul. Then have they found it no longer possible to shut themselves up in a system of cold neutrality. The soul, too strongly pressed, has been compelled to take a part,—alas! it has taken its part, and that is to *hate!* But in spite of appearances, its position is not essentially changed; it has the same aversion to the gospel, only with a more vivid consciousness, and a deeper feeling; and we can only say that in this is verified the prediction of the aged Simeon, who, when holding the infant Jesus in his arms, exclaimed, "By thee shall the thoughts of many hearts be revealed."

To hate Jesus Christ, such is the result in which neutrality and indifference eventually terminate. To hate Jesus Christ! what words are we compelled to utter! The most confirmed sceptic would not have himself considered as one who hates Jesus Christ. But this sentiment which horrifies the sceptic, is, ye indifferent ones, the habitual sentiment of your soul!

But that you may know at least what you do by hating Jesus Christ, come and see. That teacher, full of grace and truth, who went everywhere sowing the word of reconciliation; that compassionate physician, whom no wretch approached without being consoled; that friend, who sought to gather you to himself before impending calamity, as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, is the being whom you hate; that model of purity and charity, that man in whom his most furious enemies could not discover the shadow of a stain, is he whom you hate; that celestial hero, who, bearing on his conscience the guilt of humanity, sunk, in the garden of Gethsemane, under the burden of the sins of the whole earth, and drained for you the cup of divine wrath, as he lay prostrate in the dust, bathed in sweat and blood, is he whom you hate; that victim, who for you painfully climbed up the height of Calvary, permitted himself to be fastened to the cross, and suffered, in his person, all that imagination can conceive of agonies, and whose last groan was a prayer for his executioners, is he whom you hate! Do not reject this statement. If you are nothing for him who has been everything for you; if you do not give one pulsation of your heart for him who has given up his life for you; if your life is a perpetual resistance of his laws, you are his enemies; if you love him not, you hate him; and if you do not yet fight against him, you will fight against him soon.

I have arrived at the close of a painful demonstration, which I did not undertake, I ought to confess, without repugnance. But knowing too well the condition I have described, fully persuaded for a long time that he that is not with Christ is against him, I have felt it my duty to point out to my brethren the dangers of a neutrality in regard to which many perhaps deceive themselves. I would, therefore, say to them after the example of Joshua, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." Those have chosen, who, with slow and laborious step, but without irresolution, have commenced their march towards the land of infinite discoveries; who not yet possessing the whole truth, seek it with sincerity and patience; who, solicited by the flesh and the world, turn with a sigh to God, who can aid them, and who, every day, offer to the Saviour their good-will, not being able to offer him anything else. May God preserve us from discouraging any one, and "crushing," as the poet says, "the new-born germ, from which may spring an angel!" But there are others who have not chosen, and care not to choose. Some of them persuade themselves that, provided they are neither for nor against Jesus Christ, he, in like manner, will neither be for nor against them. It was necessary to show such that the neutrality in which they conceal themselves is a real enmity, and that it will be judged as such. It was necessary to arouse such by our warnings, and, in our feebleness we have made the attempt. Bless, Lord, these warnings, given in thy name. Cause them to penetrate, and take possession of all the souls which need to hear them; nay, of all our souls; for who does not need to be warned? Inspire us all with the sincere desire to belong to Jesus Christ entirely and forever.

THE TOLERANCE OF THE GOSPEL.

"He that is not against us is for us."—Luke ix. 20.

Some days ago, we developed the meaning of these words of our Lord, "He that is not with me is against me." That was presenting to you the gospel in all its intolerance. For the gospel has its intolerance, although it sympathizes not with persecutors, and breathes entire religious freedom. Its intolerance consists in considering every one as an enemy who is not its friend. We endeavored to convince you that this intolerance is reasonable, conformed to the nature of things, and worthy of God. To-day we attempt to explain these words, which are also those of our Saviour, "He that is not against us is for us." At first sight, nothing seems more contradictory than these two propositions. But the contradiction is only apparent; these two statements, instead of neutralizing, complete each other; they give a natural explanation of each other's meaning, and, to speak exactly, are only two aspects of the same truth. If our preceding text has shown us the intolerance of the gospel, this shows us the limit of that intolerance. If the first has informed us of what the gospel will not endure, the second teaches us what it will endure. If the one establishes the intolerance of

God, the other attacks and reproves the intolerance of men. These two expressions, these two truths, support each other, and hold such a relation the one to the other, that, in discussing the first a few days ago, we pledged ourselves, as it were, to discuss the other to-day. This we proceed to do, without however concealing, that if our first subject was difficult, this is still more so. You will all feel this, more or less, and for the same reason, understand how necessary it is in such a matter, that the Holy Spirit, which has purified our intentions, should enlighten our understanding, and direct our words. Ask this from him on our behalf, and ask also for yourselves an attentive spirit, a docile heart, and that quick intelligence of divine things which cannot be given but by the Spirit of God.

While Jesus, accompanied by some disciples he had chosen, is exercising, in Judea, his ministry of compassion, a man casts out demons in his name. His disciples wish to prevent him from doing so, because he follows not Jesus with them. But the Lord rebukes this indiscreet zeal, by saying, "Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us."

He that is not against us is for us. In the sense of the text we explained the other day, these words would be false; for we have seen that if any one is not positively the friend of Jesus, he is his enemy. But let us carefully notice what is referred to in the words we explain to-day. It is a man that cast out demons in the name of Jesus, only he does not follow Jesus with his disciples.

But such a man, though he did not form a part of the company that followed Jesus Christ, was certainly not against him; he was for Jesus Christ as much as the disciples themselves, and perhaps even more so. But what, in fact, was necessary in order to be *for* Jesus Christ? To confess his name, and to do his work; and these two conditions were united in the man under consideration.

He confessed the name of Jesus Christ; for the gospel informs us that it was in the name of Jesus that he cast out demons. Thus Jesus was to him what he is to all Christians, "He that was sent to destroy the kingdom of Satan,"—he before whom all the powers of darkness and the empire of evil must bend and fall,—whose name alone, invoked through faith, is an impenetrable buckler against all the fiery darts of hell,—in a word, the Saviour, because he saves us from our most cruel, from our only real enemy.

Not only did this man confess the adorable name of Jesus, but he performed his work, he cast out demons. He fought under the banner, and for the cause of Jesus. He advanced, according to his ability, the triumph of his Master. He made the enemies of Jesus his enemies, and the great design of Jesus his interest. What more did those disciples who accompanied Jesus in all his wanderings? The following we read in the chapter from which our text is taken, "And behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son; for he is mine only child. And lo, a spirit seizes him, and causes him to cry out; and it teareth him so that he foameth again, and bruising him, hardly departeth from him. And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not. And Jesus answering, said, O faithless and perverse generation! how long shall I be with you and suffer you?" (v. 39–41.) To whom, in your opinion, did he address these overwhelming words, "Unbelieving and perverse generation," but to the disciples? With whom, if not with the disciples, was Jesus tired of associating? And these very disciples, destitute of the faith necessary to perform the work of their Master, are the ones opposed to the labors of that unknown man! And why? Because he followed not Jesus with them.

Such, in fact, is all the difference which appears between this man and the disciples. It must be confessed that, at first sight, it is striking. How can he be *for* Jesus Christ and not follow him? But without seeking, by means of gratuitous suppositions, for the reasons which kept this man by himself, and compelled him to serve Jesus at a distance from him, let us observe, that at this period, our Saviour was accompanied only by those whom he had expressly called, by authoritatively separating them from their labors and their families, in order to prepare them for a glorious apostolate. It was thus he commanded Peter to leave his nets, and Matthew his bank, and follow him; but such an appeal doubtless had not been addressed to this man. It was only a little later (chap. x) that seventy disciples were associated with the twelve apostles; and who knows that this adorer of the name of Jesus did not take the first place among them?

But all this is not of so much importance as the reflection we are about to present. What is it to follow Jesus Christ? According to the apostles, yet imperfectly enlightened, it is to accompany the person of the Saviour in all places, and it was thus they followed him. But such a view is gross and carnal, and we appeal, upon this point, to the apostles themselves. One of them, the organ, in this matter, of the sentiment of all, has clearly expressed it, in saying, "If we have formerly known Christ according to the flesh, we know him in this manner no more." (2 Cor. v. 16.) And well has the apostle said so; for to know Jesus Christ is not to have seen him in the flesh; to follow Jesus Christ is not to follow his person. To know and to follow him is to recognize him as God manifest in the flesh, to rest upon his promises, to breathe his spirit. In this sense we can follow him, though separated by a thousand leagues and a thousand years.

Let us see, according to this view, how the apostles followed him, at the period referred to in my text. The imagination is pleased to represent that retinue of friends accompanying Jesus everywhere; but it sees them such as they since became, not such as they were then. Did these men, whom Jesus had chosen, not for what they were in themselves, but, as one may say, for what they were not, in order more fully to illustrate in them his power, really follow Jesus Christ? Did they follow him, when they disputed among themselves who should occupy the first places in heaven? (Mark ix. 33, 34.) Did they follow him, when they besought him to bring down fire from heaven, to destroy an unbelieving city? (Luke ix. 54.) Did they follow him, when, doubting whether they had done wisely in attaching themselves to him, they asked from him indemnities and pledges for a sacrifice scarcely commenced? (Mark x. 28.) Ah! how many times, in the midst of that company of apostles, was the Son of God alone? The sole confidant of his own high designs, the sole auditor of his own divine thoughts, how often did he seek around him in vain for a single soul that comprehended him, a single heart that loved him as he wished to be loved! In this point of view his solitude was profound. It was one of the most painful trials of his life, as it was to be the bitterest pang of his death. What, then, did these disciples claim when they said, "This man followeth thee not with us?" What difference did that establish in their favor; and how could they know that this unknown person did not follow Jesus better than they did themselves?

O, how does intolerance here, as in all other cases, show itself the close companion of weakness, and tolerance the associate of greatness! Jesus is the most tolerant of beings, because he is the most holy. Everything which affects his person as a man, disturbs him not, wounds him not. What is it to him that this man does not follow him with the twelve? He casts out demons, and casts them out in the name of the Son of God. It is enough; this man is for him.

On the contrary, see these apostles, still so weak in faith. Their disposition is the reverse of that of Jesus. What wounds them is not what wounds the cause of God, but what offends the person of their Master as a man, say rather, what offends their own person! What, in fact, is their complaint? "He followeth thee not with us;" he is not one of us. True he confesses the name of Jesus; true he casts out demons; but he follows not Jesus with us; it is enough; he is against Jesus. You have seen the tolerance of God; behold the intolerance of man.

The question now presents itself, whether this declaration of Jesus is applicable only to the occasion on which it was uttered; or whether it may not be applicable to our times and our circumstances. Are there. in our day, persons who wish to forbid others to cast out demons in the name of Jesus, because they follow him not with them? My brethren, while admitting some differences produced by difference of times, and giving to some expressions a more general sense, we meet, in our day, the same kind of intolerance as that which merited the rebuke of our Saviour, and we find for his words an immediate and constant application.

To prevent a man casting out demons in the name of Jesus, is what we cannot always do; but to reject, to exclude, to condemn him, we certainly can. To cast out demons, as the man in the text did, is what cannot take place, in modern times; but to oppose the power of the devil, by repelling his pernicious inspirations, by avoiding the snares he lays for our souls, by extirpating from our own hearts, and those of others, the germs of vice and error he has deposited there, is as possible in our day as in the times of the apostles; and, thanks to God, is what we frequently witness. Finally, to condemn, reject, and exclude a man, who, though he follows not Jesus with us, does, nevertheless, perform the works we have just indicated, is still seen, and seen every day; and this, therefore, furnishes a perpetual application for these most benignant words of the Saviour, "Why do ye forbid him? He that is not against us is for us."

Jesus has disappeared from the earth, we cannot, therefore, follow his person; but in the spiritual sense we have explained, some are easily induced to believe that they follow him better than others. Such a church, or such a community believes that to follow Jesus Christ, it is necessary to be with it, form a part of its organization, join the society of which it is composed, espouse its interests, hang out its banner. This church, this community, then, still appears, as in the times of Isaiah, to utter these words, so full of presumption and bigotry, "Stand back, come not near me; for I am holier than thou." (Isa. lxv. 5.) And more than this, we see that proposition put in practice, which shocks us so much in the doctrines of a communion from which we have separated: "Out of our church no salvation!"

Yet, it is certain, in the first place, that no church can flatter itself that it is exempt from faults and imperfections. No church can offer itself as a perfect model to all others; consequently, no church can pretend that out of its pale it is is impossible to belong to Jesus. It is absolutely necessary, then, in order to judge of those, who are not of its body, to have recourse to some other test, than the gross one of opening its registers, and seeing if such a name is found there.

Even if it were perfect, and permitted to think so, it would not, on that account, be justified in condemning those who do not belong to it. And for this simple reason, that perfection in doctrine and in morality cannot be the heritage of all; that some particular errors, some imperfections of detail, do not hinder a man from being essentially in a good state; that in every case there is a progressive improvement, with which none can well dispense; that, in general, no one arrives by a single effort, at what is best in theory and practice; and that all that man can reasonably require from his fellow-man is, that he should follow the road which conducts thither.

What I have just said, is not intended either to rejoice the careless, or alarm the strict. For, in the first place it is certain that the gospel requires nothing less from all its disciples than perfection, both in faith and in morals; and secondly, it has so clearly traced the limits, beyond which there is nothing but error and condemnation, that is impossible on this subject, to make the slightest mistake. What is the man who follows not the Saviour with his apostles, but nevertheless, is for Jesus, according to the declaration of Jesus himself? He is one who casts out demons in the name of Jesus. I say, then, to every intolerant community, You condemn that man because he follows not Jesus with you; but is it necessary to be with you, in order to confess the name of Jesus? This, however, is evidently done by the man whom you condemn. I admit that he has not studied so profoundly the system of religion as you have; that he does not with such exactness unite its different parts; that he does not so thoroughly understand the Scriptures; that the gifts of the Holy Spirit have been conferred upon him in scanty measure, and apparently according to his necessities; but he confesses the name of Jesus. The consciousness of his misery has led him to Christ; he has cast himself into the arms of the Saviour; he has loved him with all the love of which his heart is capable. It is in Him that he seeks an asylum against the wrath to come, a consolation in his sorrows, a resource in his wants. It is through Him that he invokes his Heavenly Father; and it is the name of Jesus, which he loves to whisper in the silence of his closet, and delights to honor before men, as the only name by which he can be saved. What wants he more? What! join himself to you? Confess your name as equal to that of the divine Saviour? Hang out your banner by the side of that of the Lamb? But who has told you that, I pray you? Whence do you derive it, but from yourselves? I think all that you can claim from him (my text teaches so,) is that he be not against you, that he do not reject and condemn you. Nay more, even if he had declared against you by prepossession and error, he had done nothing more than you have done to him. If he ought not to do so, why do you yourselves do it? And if you can do it, why might not he? The wrong is reciprocal; and both he and you have to return within the bounds of equity.

I acknowledge, however, that it is not everything, simply to confess and invoke the name of Jesus. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven." He must, in addition to this, cast out demons in the name of the Lord, that is, he must sanctify himself. And this is precisely what that man has done, whom you condemn. I can easily believe that he is behind you, but he advances; I can easily believe that you are far before him, but he follows you; I can believe that you have found means of edification of which he is ignorant, and admit, that if he were more enlightened, he would profit by the resources you have found, and that he would join you. Nevertheless, he has understood, and his conduct proves it, that whosoever says he belongs to Christ ought to live even as Christ lived; that the crucifixion of the old man with his lusts is the only homage worthy of being offered to the Saviour; that he must cast out, in his name, the demons of pride, of sensuality, of self-love, and of self-righteousness which infest the heart of man; that he must contend against them by vigilance and prayer· and that unless he is made a new creature in Christ Jesus, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven. I say to you, God alone may require more; yet I believe he casts a look of benignity and peace upon that servant, who has been faithful, in few things it is true, but yet faithful. Is it for you, then, to condemn him?

How often have I seen, bearing the burden of the day, and bending under the cross of his Saviour, a man to whom intolerance has scarcely accorded the name of Christian. Contending with old weaknesses, so hard to remove, bowed down under the habits of a long life, and still retaining the visible imprint of his fetters, inveterate habits and usages still revealed in him the old man. Yet he had heard the call of grace, and, according to the measure of strength given him, he had made his way out of that valley of the shadow of death, by a painful path, bathed in sweat and tears. He confessed Jesus with sincerity; but with the feeling of wretchedness scarcely removed. It was only with timidity, that he could deem himself one of the sheep whom Jesus knows, whom Jesus loves, and whom his crook conducts to the pastures of life. And I have seen men, on account of the incoherence of his language, the remains of his ancient habits, and the feebleness of his character, take it upon them to refuse him the title they accorded to themselves, and dispute his interest in their common hopes! Yet these men called themselves Christians! And they were such in fact; but the remains of the old man persuaded them, that in order to follow Jesus Christ, he must follow him *with them*, seek their society, relish their discourse, adopt their practices. But I have consoled myself by remembering that they were at one time more exclusive still, that Christianity had already partially subdued their native intolerance; and by reflecting, that in proportion as they should more fully taste the gift of God, they would put on more and more that divine compassion, charity and meekness, which ought ever to distinguish the elect of God, his saints and well-beloved ones; for tolerance, I have said already, is always in proportion to holiness.

Ah! if in our day, we had to complain only of the intolerance of Christians, we should be tranquil. Faith, which is the occasion of it, is also its remedy. But there is a more formidable intolerance, that of unbelief, or a dead faith. We have seen, with profound regret, Christian communities condemn men, though they cast out demons in the name of Jesus; but we may also see unbelievers and formalists condemning others, precisely because they cast out demons in the name of Jesus. Tolerant of indifference and lukewarmness, it is for zeal and living faith that they reserve their intolerance. And, what is remarkable, it is not because they believe themselves to possess the depository of truth, and the standard of morals, but on the contrary, because they feel that they have them not, and cannot suffer any one to enjoy a blessing, of which they are destitute. And not only do they condemn them by their words, but they *hinder* them, when they can, they interdict, they persecute them. They deny and trample under foot, not merely the letter and spirit of the gospel, but the most sacred rights of the human race. And the immense progress of light is not sufficient to repress these excesses, and public reason is scarcely shocked at them.

My dearly beloved brethren, pray with me for the peace of Jerusalem; pray that the powers of darkness may not long oppose the reign of light; pray that the consciences of men may receive no other impulse than that of the Holy Spirit. Above all, pray that Christianity, becoming purer in all the souls that have received it may present, in every place, the example of that divine tolerance which shone in the person of its adorable founder; pray that all Christians may become more and more worthy of that divine banner, under which they have ranged themselves, the device of which is Love! And thou eternal God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, thou who art clothed with all perfection, and whose eyes are too pure to behold iniquity, but who art full of patience and long-suffering, breathe thy indulgent spirit into those, who themselves need it so much from thee; teach them tolerance to those whom thou dost tolerate; give to them the dispositions of Jesus Christ, who, satisfied with a pure intention, and an honest will, waits long for what he might demand at once. Teach us, like him, to look upon the heart, upon what is essential, and not upon vain circumstances. Enlarge our heart; tear away the prejudices and pride which have narrowed its entrance, and grant that all those whom thou hast given us as brethren, may find there an asylum and a home!

THE END.

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